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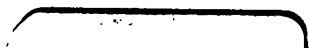
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# THE CLIMAX



CHARLES FELTON PIDGIN



12/20/00



*The* CLIMAX











"DEFEND YOURSELF."  
(Page 302.)

# *The* CLIMAX

OR

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

A Romance of the  
Great Republic

BY

CHARLES FETTON WIDGIN

AUTHOR OF

QUINCY ADAMS SAWYER  
AND BLENNERHASSETT

C. M. CLARK  
PUBLISHING  
COMPANY

BOSTON, MASS.  
1877



PS 2584  
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MISS CARRO M. CLARK  
*This Book is*  
*Deservedly Dedicated*  
*As a Cordial*  
*Recognition of Her*  
*Business Enterprise*  
*Sagacity and Success*





### *AUTHOR'S PREFACE*

I am told that prefaces are old-fashioned and unnecessary, but I cannot give up so time-honored a custom without a few words of introduction to the public.

This book does not need a long prelude. Perhaps I can do no better than to quote those singularly truthful words written by the People's Poet —

"For of all sad words of tongue  
or pen,  
The saddest are these: 'It might  
have been.'"

One more word; being purely imaginative, this work cannot be historically true; but I would ask the reader if he or she does not wish it were true.

C. F. P.

*Gray Chambers  
20 Mt. Vernon St.,  
Boston, Mass.  
June, 1902.*



FRONTISPIECE—"Defend Yourself!"

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### *Notice.*

*The publishers of this book enclose in every copy a postal card which reads as follows:*

If you will return this card with your name and address in full we will send you free of expense a beautiful copy of the frontispiece "*Defend Yourself*" printed in 4 colors, size, 14 x 28

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# THE CLIMAX.

## CHAPTER I.

### "NIPPED IN THE BUD."

"COME IN!"

At this invisible welcome, a young and very pretty woman opened the door a short distance and looked in.

"Is this General Hamilton's office?" she asked, and her voice was low and sweet.

"Yes, ma'am," said one of the two young men present, whose name was Lemuel Putney. "This is his office, but he isn't here just now. You can come in and wait. That door, there," said he, pointing, "leads to his private office. He may or may not be in there; but if he is, when he is at liberty, he will look in here to see if any one is waiting to see him."

"Have a chair, ma'am," said the other young man, whose name was Isaiah Griggs, and the young girl, closing the door, took a seat only a few feet removed from it.

The young men were law students, or rather as-

## *THE CLIMAX*

sistants, in General Hamilton's law office in New York City. When the summons had come at the door, both had been busily engaged in copying some legal documents, but after the advent of the young girl both found it necessary to continually consult certain law books. While thus engaged each enjoyed good facilities for examining the profile of their employer's beautiful client, for they naturally inferred that she wished to consult him upon some legal matter.

Each had secretly hoped that their fair visitor would betray some interest in their work and turn her head so that they could get a better view of her face. In this they were disappointed, for she retained her original position with the fixity of a statue.

Suddenly she arose to her feet, walked to the door and placed her hand upon the latch.

"I don't think I'll wait any longer," she said.

Before the young men could remonstrate or present any reason for her longer detention, she had left the room and closed the door.

"By Jove!" said Lemuel, "wasn't she pretty? I wonder what she wants?"

"If you wait long enough," said his companion, "you will find out. The documents will reach us in due time and we shall learn all about it."

"I hope she'll come back," said Lemuel. "If she goes to find some other lawyer, your prognostication will fail of fulfilment."

The young girl did not go in search of any other lawyer. She stood outside the door, uncertain

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what to do next, when a gentleman ascended the stairs, and entered the room adjoining the one which she had just left. The young girl followed so closely behind him that he became aware of her proximity, and, turning suddenly, asked her whom she wished to see.

"Are you General Hamilton?"

"I am," was the reply. "Walk in, madam."

Gen. Hamilton removed his surtout and placed his three-cornered hat upon its accustomed peg. He motioned the young girl to a chair beside his desk, at which he seated himself.

"Now, madam," said he, "in what manner can I serve you?"

He drew some sheets of paper toward him and took up his quill pen.

"Your name?"

"My name," said the young girl, "is Reynolds, Maria Reynolds. I am married. My husband's name is James Reynolds. We have been married for four years. I have a little daughter two years old. For the last six months my husband has failed to provide means for our support. I've exhausted all my resources and I've come to you to learn whether there's any way by which he can be compelled to keep his marriage vows."

"Has your husband any regular employment?" asked the General.

"He did have," was the reply, "until six months ago. He had a position as clerk in one of the departments in Washington. For some reason, with which I am unacquainted, he was discharged. He

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told me it was useless to try for another place there, and we came to New York; but since we have been here, I don't think he has had any regular employment."

"If he is unable to obtain work," said the General, "it is his misfortune rather than his fault. If he could earn money, do you not think he would support you as he did before he lost his position?"

"Perhaps so and perhaps not," said the woman somewhat doggedly; "that's what I wish to find out. I can get no satisfaction from him, but I thought perhaps the law could make him speak."

While Mrs. Reynolds had been talking, Gen. Hamilton had kept his eyes fixed upon her. She was fair to look upon. She was evidently inexperienced in the ways of the world or she would not have thought that the law could take cognizance of a case like hers. A dozen different ideas ran through Gen. Hamilton's mind as he sat looking at the fair young face, but they evidently crystallized into one, and this one found expression in words.

"My dear Mrs. Reynolds," he began, "unless your husband has ill-used you, I do not see how the law can help you. If your husband could obtain work and would not work, it might come to your relief; but if he is unfortunate and cannot obtain employment, I see no way except for you to share his misfortune with him."

"Then you cannot help me?" cried the young woman, and she clasped her hands nervously together.

"I did not say that I could not," said Hamilton

### *"NIPPED IN THE BUD"*

in his blandest manner. "I said that the law could not. It is possible that I, personally, may be able to help you, if you are willing to undertake some professional work which I think I can entrust to you."

"But what can I do with the baby?" asked the young woman, and once more she clasped her hands together nervously.

"Oh, if the position suits you, the emolument will be sufficient to enable you to engage some one to take charge of your little daughter."

"If my husband asks me for money, shall I be obliged to give it to him?"

"We will arrange that," said Hamilton. "I will pay you on account from time to time, as your needs may require, so you will have no surplus in your possession to support him in idleness. If you will give me your address I will communicate with you in a few days—as soon as I am ready to engage your services."

"Thank you, General," said the young woman, as she arose to go.

"Oh, I forgot," she cried. "I live on Charlton street, next door to the Green Dragon Tavern."

"Are you going home now?" asked the General. "I have some business that will take me to Varick street, and if you have no objection, I will walk with you."

Before descending the stairs, he opened the door and said to his assistants:

"I shall be absent for an hour or two."

"She found him," said Lemuel.



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"Yes," rejoined Isaiah; "but, as the Good Book says—the end is not yet."

About half an hour after Gen. Hamilton left his office in company with Mrs. Reynolds, a tall, strongly-built and swarthy-faced man, with black hair and dark piercing eyes opened the door to the room occupied by Gen. Hamilton's assistants and asked in a loud, firm voice:

"When will General Hamilton return?"

Neither of the young men spoke for a moment, when Griggs replied:

"Well, that's hard to tell. He went out about half an hour ago with a young lady who called to see him, and his return is uncertain."

"Thank you," said the man.

He entered Hamilton's private office and seated himself in the same chair which had been occupied by Mrs. Reynolds.

It was William P. Van Ness, one of Col. Aaron Burr's most intimate friends, who sat in Gen. Hamilton's office awaiting his return. Van Ness wished to see Hamilton on some legal business. Although he was personally and politically opposed to Hamilton, his profession as a lawyer brought him often in contact with him.

A messenger boy entered and laid a folded sheet upon the General's desk. The boy waited for a few moments, and then said to Van Ness:

"I can't wait any longer. I've got another errand to do. I'll come in again on my way back."

Van Ness became uneasy. He glanced at the sheet which the boy had brought. It was in printed

### *"NIPPED IN THE BUD"*

form. The paper was thin and the type large. The impression showed through and Van Ness was startled at beholding the word "BURR" in very large type. Everything that related to Aaron Burr interested him, and, without stopping to think of possible consequences, he opened the sheet and looked at it.

He started back in astonishment. It was the proof of a political poster or handbill. It declared in coarse and brutal language that Aaron Burr was a profligate of the worst stamp and that the cities of Albany and New York were ringing with the cries of his victims. It called upon the voters of New York to vote against this man and preserve the sanctity of the home.

In one corner of the poster was pinned a small sheet of paper, upon which was written the following:

"I think this will do. If you approve it, send word by the bearer. Keep it confidential. It will be sent out secretly and will not be posted until the night before the election. J. C."

The General's voice was heard in the passageway. He had opened the door of the adjoining room and was speaking to one of his clerks. Van Ness folded up the obnoxious poster and placed it in the inside pocket of his coat, regardless of the results of such an act.

Gen. Hamilton entered and Van Ness soon transacted the business which had brought him there. As he was preparing to leave, the boy returned and asked the General for his answer.

## THE CLIMAX

"Answer to what?" asked Hamilton. "I have received nothing from you. I have not seen you before today."

Van Ness mentally noted the fact that Hamilton was in the habit of seeing this messenger occasionally, perhaps every day during a political contest.

"I brought something here that Mr. ——" the boy began.

"No matter who sent you," broke in Hamilton sharply.

Van Ness mentally noted the fact that Hamilton knew from whom the message came.

"What did you do with what you brought?" Hamilton continued.

"I put it on your desk, right there," said the boy, pointing. "That man," he continued, looking at Van Ness, "was here when I did it."

The boy, eager to free himself from the charge of negligence, and to avoid a probable difficulty with his irascible employer, added:

"Perhaps he knows where it's gone to."

"It is a matter, General," said Van Ness, "in which I am as much interested as you. Please tell the boy you will send the answer later."

Hamilton was somewhat mystified, but pointed to the door; the boy went toward it, lingering, however, after he had opened it, in the hope of receiving some written message which he could take to his employer.

"I will send the answer later," said the General.

The boy slammed the door and the sound of his retreating footsteps was heard.

### *"NIPPED IN THE BUD"*

Van Ness then drew the poster from his pocket, opened it, and held it at arm's length before the astonished gaze of the General.

"My dear Hamilton," said Van Ness, "this little joke of yours is found out. I know that for years you have considered it perfectly honorable and proper to secretly malign and abuse my friend, Colonel Aaron Burr, but this matter is going no further. If you wish any satisfaction for my tampering with your private papers, you are at liberty to ask for it in any way that you choose."

"I will have you arrested for theft!" cried Hamilton, in a fit of passionate rage.

"Nothing would suit me better," rejoined the imperturbable Van Ness. "That would bring the matter into court, which is just where I propose to take it. Will you come with me now and enter your complaint or shall I be obliged to go alone? Under the circumstances, I will put up with your company in anticipation of the probable satisfactory result."

Like all men who are prone to intimidate and browbeat others, when attacked by another in like manner, Gen. Hamilton was slow and weak in retaliation. Van Ness waited for Hamilton's reply. As none came, he folded up the paper, replaced it in his pocket, and left the office without another word.

He went at once to Col. Burr's office. The matter was talked over between them, and immediate and decisive action at once taken. The matter was carried before a judge, and, within an hour, an in-

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junction was issued against James Cheetham, forbidding him, under penalty of the law, to print and circulate the poster in question or any copy or imitation containing the same abusive language.

"How about the principal criminal?" asked Van Ness of Col. Burr after the paper had been placed in a constable's hands for service.

"It will depend upon the result of the election," Burr replied.

"If you are successful?" interrogated Van Ness.

"Hamilton's knowledge of his defeat will be severer punishment than I could mete out to him," was Burr's reply.

"But if you are defeated?" persisted Van Ness.

"Then I will take the matter into my own hands," said Burr, "and will see that his treachery and duplicity are fitly rewarded."

## CHAPTER II.

### IN POWER.

**B**Y this prompt action on the part of Van Ness the conspiracy was defeated. The election took place, and, although the vote was close, Burr was elected Governor by a majority of about fifteen hundred votes. For the times, this was large, for the state of New York had been carried for Jefferson and Burr by a bare majority of five hundred, and this small margin had made Jefferson President of the United States and Burr Vice-President.

Domiciled in his official headquarters at Albany, Gov. Burr's first political act was to appoint his trusted friend and sworn ally, William P. Van Ness, as Attorney-General of the state. Upon receiving notice of his appointment, the new Attorney-General at once sought his chief.

After the usual courtesies and felicitations were over, Van Ness said:

"We are the victors and our reward is certain; but what is to be the merited punishment dealt out to the vanquished conspirators? I hope, Burr, that you will not allow your oftentimes too generous nature to influence you in this matter. Cheetham is not an ordinary villain; he is a low-toned

## *THE CLIMAX*

rascal. He has been willing to serve both parties, if paid for it, and he has served that party best which paid the most. I consider it a well-defined case of conspiracy, and I hope that you will allow me to proceed against him to the full extent of the law."

"I cannot agree with you, Van Ness," the Governor replied. "The wish of my parents, if they had lived, would have been for me to become a clergyman, like my honored father and grandfather. I have imbibed enough of the ancestral spirit to have in me a feeling of pity for even those who attempt to secure great ends by base methods. My personal choice, founded upon both education and inclination, would be to become a military man in the full sense of the word. Now, if Cheetham and his partner, whom it is unnecessary to call by name, had been my enemies upon the field of battle, although they might have tried by unmanly means to cause my defeat, if I were victorious, I should shrink from meting out to them any other punishment than that which would come to them from the consciousness of their own defeat."

"I thought it would end that way," said Van Ness, and there was an expression upon his face which indicated that the course of action decided upon by his friend, the Governor, did not satisfy him in any degree. He thought for a moment; then said in a tone indicative of impelled resignation:

"I suppose that it is unnecessary and that it will

## IN POWER

be unpleasant for me to refer to the matter again. I shall respect your decision, Governor, but I trust that you will not consider that I am any less your friend if my opinion of the matter differs from yours."

"Certainly not," said Burr, extending his hand to Van Ness. "I prize your friendship, Van Ness, not because you always agree with me, but because, as a rule, we conscientiously differ on most important matters. Did you follow my beck and call without ever venturing upon criticism or remonstrance, you would be of little use to me, either as friend or counsellor, but," and a smile spread over his face as he said it, "I know that whatever view I may take of an important public question, my good friend Van Ness will be sure to see the opposite side of it and from the most honest and conscientious motives strongly maintain that I am wrong."

The Governor looked fixedly at his friend for a moment and then continued:

"Look back at the history of our political associations and see if I have not deferred to your opinion at least half of the time."

Van Ness laughed in spite of himself. "I shall take advantage of a lawyer's right to quibble," said he, "and insist that you have not done so in more than forty-nine per cent of the instances referred to by you."

"Then," cried Burr vigorously, "I will do something that will place the balance to my credit at once. Now listen. You know that there are now



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intrenched in the public offices of this state hundreds of men who at heart are Federalists, though they may not all be good friends of General Hamilton. Now, what course would you advise in regard to these men?"

"I would remove every one of them from office at the earliest possible moment," cried Van Ness, "and fill their places with men who can be trusted."

"I understand," said Burr, "by men who can be trusted you mean men upon whom we can rely to do our bidding."

"Certainly," replied Van Ness; "if a political party is victorious, it has the right to remove its enemies from office. If this right be not conceded, of what use are elections, anyway? If men are to be retained without regard to their political affiliations, why not make all such appointments permanent?"

"I am inclined to think, sometimes," was the Governor's reply, "that if there could be a system of examination as to physical and mental fitness, that any man appointed to what is now considered a government office should retain his position during good behavior, unless it could be proved that he was engaging to an undue extent in politics."

"Would that rule apply to the Governor?" asked Van Ness, with a slight tone of sarcasm.

"Certainly not!" said Burr in a spirited manner. "I refer to those positions which are merely administrative or clerical in their nature, not to those of honor and trust. In the olden days, you know, Van Ness, no man was eligible to office unless he

## IN POWER

professed a certain religion. Thanks to reason and common sense, that test is not now applied to any great extent. My dear Van Ness, the day will come, though yet far in the future, when merit and fitness will be the tests rather than the color of a man's political coat, which can be so easily changed to conform to circumstances."

"But that time has not yet come," said Van Ness. "You are not in 1854, Governor, but in 1804. It is too early to anticipate today what may be done a half century hence."

Both men sat silent for several minutes. Van Ness was not satisfied, and the Governor was fully aware of the mental opposition of his friend. Suddenly he turned to Van Ness, and said:

"I am going to surprise you. You have known, as well as I, that General Hamilton has for many years resorted to underhand methods to prevent me from obtaining military or political preferment. This knowledge, although well proven verbally, has lacked positive documentary attestation. Fortunately, yesterday, by chance, there came into my hands a certain paper which supplies me with both the incentive and the opportunity to deal directly with General Hamilton. I wrote him a short communication last night asking him to visit me here in Albany at his earliest convenience. I entered into no explanation for my reasons for wishing to see him."

"He won't come," said Van Ness. "He thinks that you are bitter against him and that you wish to get him here so that you can deal with him at

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close range and thus save yourself the trouble of going to New York."

"I did not expect that we should agree upon this point," said the Governor. "I think he will come. Hamilton is no coward, from a physical point of view. He is an adept lawyer, and knows what I can do and what I cannot do as well as I do. We will wait and see which one of us is right."

This terminated the interview, and a week passed before Van Ness, who was very busy familiarizing himself with the duties of his new office, was summoned to the presence of the Governor. When he entered the room, he was greatly surprised to find that the Governor had a visitor, and that this visitor was none other than Gen. Hamilton. The usual courtesies were exchanged, and then the Governor motioned to Van Ness to take a seat opposite him.

"General Hamilton," Burr began, "I have sent for you to confer with you on a most important matter. It is one that affects not only you, personally, but hundreds of your friends now holding public office in this state. My friend Van Ness, who is the legal officer of the state, is of the opinion that all of your friends should be removed from office and our friends placed in their stead. I am loath to do this unless upon sufficient provocation; and allow me to say here I shall not do it unless I receive this provocation; and more, it may surprise you to hear it, General, but this provocation must come from you, not a week hence or a month hence, but here, today, in this very room."

## IN POWER

Gen. Hamilton looked up with a puzzled air. "I do not understand you," he said.

"You will, shortly," was the Governor's reply. "I have been informed by several persons, who may have been influenced by the idea that if they put me in possession of certain so-called facts that it might inure to their political benefit in the future, that during the gubernatorial campaign which closed with my election——"

As these words fell from Burr's lips, Van Ness could not restrain a sinister smile. The Governor did not see this somewhat supercilious facial comment upon the issue of the campaign, and went on:

"That you used every means within your power to secure my defeat."

Gen. Hamilton probably fancied that Gov. Burr had stated his grievance in full and he replied promptly:

"I certainly had the right to use every honest effort to secure the defeat of a political opponent."

"Honest means, surely," said the Governor in a grave tone of voice; "had you confined yourself to such a course, I should have no just cause for complaint; but my informants went further and said that, not satisfied with honorable opposition, you had descended to underhanded and dishonorable methods. Do not understand me by this remark as referring to the handbill against the posting of which an injunction was issued."

Again a sinister smile lit up Van Ness's swarthy, vindictive face.

## THE CLIMAX

"I had supposed," said Gen. Hamilton, "it was that to which you did refer."

"Not at all. I am told that you wrote letters, marked confidential, to the leading citizens of the state, in which you not only assailed my political record, but my private character; that in these letters you declared that I was no friend to my native land and that my personal ambition to rule was so great that I was determined to mount to the highest office in this country, even if I were forced to tread upon the necks of the people and bring ruin and disaster to all. In these letters you compared me to Catiline, an infamous Roman traitor who was fed upon insubordination even in his very cradle. What answer do you make, General, to these charges of my so-called friends?"

"They are utterly false!" exclaimed the General, rising. "That I have opposed your political advancement is true, but I have always done so from the purest and highest-minded motives. I defy any friend of yours or any enemy of mine to prove to the contrary."

"In saying those words," and Gov. Burr also arose from his chair as he spoke, "you have supplied me with the provocation which I feared you would."

Van Ness made no effort to conceal the smile which now covered his face. This was growing interesting. Burr was not, after all, such a soft-hearted conqueror as he had feared. This was a political drama in real earnest, and, strange to say, Van Ness had no idea what Burr would say next.

## IN POWER

As regarded this particular matter, he had surely not been made a confidant.

Burr took a paper from a drawer in his desk and slowly unfolded it.

"If you had confined your defamatory epistles, my dear General, to those whom you knew to be your friends and whom you had a right to address confidentially, you probably would not have been placed in your present dilemma. Luck falls to some people. I have had little of it during my career, but perhaps this one stroke which I now experience may compensate for the lack of it in the past."

It was plain to Van Ness's keen observation that Gen. Hamilton was totally unaware of the nature of the accusation which was to be brought against him. Van Ness eyed his old-time enemy as a tiger might have looked upon a lamb which it knew was within its power.

Col. Burr looked at the open paper and said: "This letter is signed A. Hamilton. The writing is well known to me. Do you recognize that signature, Van Ness?"

The Attorney-General looked at the name and nodded.

"In the upper left-hand corner is the word 'Confidential.' The body of the letter is evidently written with the same pen that wrote the name. So far, my dear General, there is no case against you, but the fact is, that in sending that letter to an individual with whom you were not personally acquainted and of whose political affiliations you

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could only judge from information given you second-hand, you committed a grave political mistake. You sent it to one of my personal friends who, upon its receipt, immediately forwarded it to me. Now, General Hamilton, you have no right to find fault with the course which I now intend to pursue. It is not necessary for me to read this letter aloud. It is undoubtedly a sample of hundreds of a similar tenor which you have sent to other persons, equally defamatory in their nature; but, my dear General, I shall not take the course which I have decided to follow because you wrote this letter and mistakenly sent it to a friend of mine. No; I have a deeper reason, a greater justification. It is your statement made here in the presence of my friend, the Attorney-General, that convicts you, and not this letter. I will show you how little I rely upon this written declaration of your feelings."

As the Governor finished speaking, he tore the letter into small pieces and threw them upon the floor. Gov. Burr walked to the door which led to an adjoining room and placed his hand upon the latch.

"Good day, General Hamilton; I wish you both legal and financial prosperity in the future. General Van Ness, I desire to confer with you after you have made your adieux to General Hamilton."

The Governor bowed, entered the next room and closed the door.

"To whom was that letter sent?" said Hamilton, nervously and anxiously.

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"I do not know," replied Van Ness. "If I did, you could not expect me to tell you when the Governor did not seem disposed to do so."

"He can bring no proof that I wrote such a letter," said Hamilton sharply.

"He evidently does not wish to. He knows that you wrote it and will probably consider that fact sufficient. Good day, General," and Van Ness walked toward the door of the apartment which the Governor had entered.

Without replying, Hamilton left the room, and, within an hour, started on his return journey to New York. What was impending? What did the Governor intend to do? There was but one thing for him to do. He must assemble his friends, put his political house in order, and be prepared to meet the attacks of this new power.

Personally, as Van Ness had said, Aaron Burr was a good-natured man. He could forgive a personal injury and readily forget the occurrence; but, as he had said, he was at heart a military man and a born disciplinarian. To a military man, an enemy is an enemy and is to be treated as such until he surrenders or sues for mercy. Aaron Burr, having received what he considered a just provocation from Gen. Hamilton, carried his military disposition into his political life, much to Van Ness's both inwardly and outwardly expressed satisfaction.

Alexander Hamilton had been his military, legal, and political enemy for years. Burr had been victorious politically and had risen to the high posi-



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tions of Senator and Vice-President of the United States. He had been once more victorious, and from his position as Governor of New York he saw that the highest place in the gift of the American people was within his reach.

He had immediately after his election resigned his position as Vice-President in order to assume his new duties.

The conference to which Gov. Burr had invited his Attorney-General was productive of immediate and most practical political results. The Governor organized his political forces and proceeded against Alexander Hamilton and the Federalists as though they had been military enemies intrenched in a fort or standing before him in the open field. Every Federalist holding public office in the state was displaced and his position was filled by an ardent Republican,—it is needless to say by a Republican who believed in Aaron Burr rather than in Thomas Jefferson. His devoted followers gathered about him and the Tenth Legion swelled in numbers and in influence.

From her fathers long and graphic letters and from the newspapers, his loving daughter Theodosia learned the full measure of the authority which her father had won. Delighted with his success, in her enthusiasm, she wrote letters to him in which her heartfelt congratulations were so carelessly arranged, when judged by the strict rules of grammar, that, in his reply, her father administered to her a sharp reproof for being so careless in her

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**writing and so regardless of the well-known rules of grammatical construction.**

Under Gov. Burr's direction, a system of correspondence was inaugurated between the adherents of Burr in New York and in the other states in the Union, and Thomas Jefferson saw that, at the end of his second term, it would be impossible to perpetuate the Virginia dynasty and that the reins of power would fall into the hands of the successful leader of the ruling party in New York.

## CHAPTER III.

### AT "THE GRANGE."

A MONTH had elapsed since the visit of Mrs. Maria Reynolds to Gen. Hamilton's law office. During that period, he had met her six times. On the first occasion, she had called again at his law office, but the subsequent meetings had been, by Hamilton's request, at her own residence. He seemed greatly interested in Mrs. Reynolds' little daughter Alice. He said that he was the father of seven children and that he thought a man who was blessed with so numerous a progeny was indeed rich, although Fortune might not have showered financial favors upon him.

During the whole time, Mrs. Reynolds' husband, so she informed Gen. Hamilton, was absent in Philadelphia endeavoring to obtain a position in the Custom House in that city. She had applied to Gen. Hamilton to write a letter to the Collector of that port, indorsing her husband's application, but he had refused compliance on the ground that, being a citizen of New York, he had no right to interfere with the making of appointments in the state of Pennsylvania. The young woman, whose knowledge of politics was extremely limited, ac-

## AT "THE GRANGE"

cepted this excuse as valid and final, and referred no more to the subject.

There was great bustle and activity on a certain pleasant morning in the month of May at "The Grange," Gen. Hamilton's country house. The reason for this unusual commotion was known to every servant in the house. Every year, since her marriage, during the month of May, Mrs. Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton had paid a visit to her father in Albany, taking with her those of her children who were able to accompany her. This ability consisted in their being able to take care of themselves, to a great extent, during the long and somewhat tedious trip. This annual pilgrimage to the home shrine in which her patriotic father sat was a bright spot in the lives of the children and their mother, who was a devoted daughter.

By noon, the preparations were all made and the Hamilton carriage took them to the starting place, where they entered the stage coach, the interior of which on this occasion was devoted to the members of the Hamilton family. Gen. Hamilton bade goodbye to his wife and children, sending loving words and kind wishes to his father-in-law, and then returned to The Grange, which was to be for the next month in charge of Mrs. Maturin, a housekeeper of the old school. To Miss Van Rensselaer, who possessed the name but had not inherited any of the wealth of that celebrated New York family, was committed the charge of the two youngest members of the Hamilton household.

On the evening of the day following the one

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upon which Mrs. Hamilton started upon her journey, Gen. Hamilton had a caller. He had told Ambrose, the butler, that he expected a lady would call to see him on legal business that evening; that he had allowed her to do so because she was a widow with a young child, and was unable to leave it alone while she made the long trip to his office in the city. He added that her residence was not far removed from The Grange and that he thought it would have been a cruelty not to accede to her request.

Ambrose, who was used to his master's fluency of speech, which often degenerated into verbosity, accepted the explanation with that stoicism so common in servants occupying high positions in genteel households, and when the lady arrived, showed her at once to the library, where his master was seated.

When Mrs. Reynolds took the seat to which Gen. Hamilton motioned her, he saw by the light of the candelabrum that her face was flushed and her manner excited.

"Something must have occurred, my dear Mrs. Reynolds," said he, "to disturb your usual equanimity. It is quite dark tonight. I trust that you were not molested by any one on your way here."

"No, it's not that," said the woman, "but my husband has got back from Philadelphia and he's in a very ugly state of mind. He says that he could have obtained the position which he was endeavoring to secure had it not been for the fact that some

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New York politician wrote to the Collector informing him that my husband was untrustworthy, having been discharged from the position which he formerly held in Washington. My husband told me this afternoon that when he held the place in Washington it was under a different name, and that no one here in New York could have known of his being discharged unless I had told of the fact.

"He threatened to kill me, or what was worse, to take my little girl away from me if I didn't tell him to whom I had communicated the fact of his employment in Washington and of his dismissal. He became so violent that I was forced to confess that I had told you. He asked my reason for going to see you. I didn't give him the real reason, but told him I went to get some copying to do so that I could get some money to support myself and child. I was never afraid of him before, but today he was so angry I was really frightened."

As the young woman said this her pent-up feelings sought relief in tears.

"You did very wisely," said Gen. Hamilton, "not to mention to your husband the real reason for your visit to my office. If he suspected that you had gone there with a view of bringing him before a judge for non-support, he might have committed a terrible crime."

Mrs. Reynolds had wiped away her tears while the General was speaking.

"But that's not the worst of it, General," said she. "He says that if I told no one but you about

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his discharge from the Washington position, it must have been you who wrote the letter to the Collector at Philadelphia."

Gen. Hamilton lifted up both hands and waved them in a deprecatory manner.

"Why, what could have put such an idea as that into his head?" he exclaimed. "What possible reason could I have for wishing to prevent your husband from securing employment? I love my own wife and children too dearly to endeavor to prevent a husband and father from enjoying those home comforts which I prize so highly."

These words, spoken in a feeling manner, were soothing and convincing to the confiding Mrs. Reynolds; but through Hamilton's mind there ran swiftly a clear remembrance of a certain letter written by him about a week previous in which he had advised the Collector of Customs at Philadelphia that James Reynolds was not a reliable and trustworthy man. When he wrote that letter, he had looked down deep into his own heart and had decided that if James Reynolds secured the desired position in Philadelphia he would probably take his wife and child with him to that city. In such a case, Gen. Hamilton felt, in fact knew, that he would be deprived of the valuable assistance of Mrs. Reynolds in the work which he had laid out for her. She was young and pretty, and these were absolutely essential requisites for the successful prosecution of the work which he had in hand.

"I regret very much to learn," said Gen. Hamil-

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ton, "that your husband has failed to obtain the situation. It must be a satisfaction to you, Mrs. Reynolds, to know that he is not unwilling to work and that he would support you if he could obtain employment. That fact being so clearly established, it would detract from my professional reputation if I should ask a judge to take any such course as you suggested at the time of your first visit to my office. No, no!" he cried, again waving his hands as if to brush away the thought of such an action on his part, "the only course that seems open for you to follow, Mrs. Reynolds, is to accept the proposition to enter my service."

"What am I to do?" asked the young woman, somewhat listlessly, as she sat with her hands folded in her lap and looked inquiringly at the General.

"If the services I wish rendered were of a legal or political nature, I should have talked it over with you, my dear Mrs. Reynolds, at my city office; but as the matter in which I desire your services is a personal one, I have thought this a more secluded and fitting place for the long story which I am obliged to tell you. You cannot serve me faithfully and well unless you understand the motives which are guiding my conduct and which lead me to employ you.

"Draw your chair closer, my dear Mrs. Reynolds, for the walls have ears, or rather my servants have, and I do not care to have them become possessed of certain facts connected with my



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early life which I am forced, by the nature of the case, to confide to you."

Mrs. Reynolds did as requested and the General began his story.

"I have been a fortunate man in many respects, Mrs. Reynolds, but in some others I have been most unfortunate. The majority of children when they are old enough to become cognizant of the nature of their surroundings find that they have a loving mother and a devoted father, perhaps loving brothers and sisters. They know from the actions of relatives and neighbors that their father and mother are in good standing. They are told of their parents' marriage and what a grand time there was at the wedding. Perhaps their grandmother resides with them and lives over again the happy day that saw her daughter united to the man she loved.

"To me have fallen no such memories; no such happy recitals. My mother, united to a man whom she did not love, but whom she married to please her parents, finally ran away from him and sought seclusion in one of the West India Islands. She was a French woman, with all the beauty and vivacity of the women of that nation. She could not obtain a legal divorce, but she yearned for love, and where women—and men, too—cannot love lawfully, they will and do love unlawfully. I know you will spare me a more particular recital of my loss of birthright. I bear the name of Hamilton. This was my father's name, but to it my mother never had any legal right.

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"My father was descended from the old Scottish Lairds of The Grange. I have always felt that it was not my fault that I was not entitled to claim a legitimate descent from my illustrious ancestors. I had a double purpose in naming my country house 'The Grange;' it was to show that I was proud of my ancestors and that I revered the hallowed associations that clustered about the old name; and also to show to my kindred that, even though I were deprived of my birthright, I was proud enough, ambitious enough, and strong enough to weave about the old name in a new land romantic associations of which even they need not be ashamed."

The young woman's face assumed a sympathetic expression, but she said nothing. The General went on:

"You can imagine with what alacrity I accepted an opportunity which was offered me to leave the island of my birth and come to the Colonies to secure an education, fame, fortune, and a name!"

As the General uttered these last words, he delivered them with as much oratorical force as he would have used in addressing a jury.

"Hush!" said Mrs. Reynolds in a whisper. "Your servants will overhear you."

The General smiled. "I have no objection to their hearing what I speak in a loud voice. They, as well as others, know that I have secured all that my ambition craved. No, not all! There is something still left. It is to secure that that I need your best services."

## THE CLIMAX

Mrs. Reynolds leaned forward in her chair, placed her elbows upon her knees, and rested her face between her hands. It was not a very dignified attitude, but it indicated a most receptive mood. The General drew his chair still closer to hers and looked into the beautiful upturned face.

"There is a man in New York," he began, "who has been my rival since we first met. That first meeting, before either of us had attained our majority, was at the residence of a wealthy New York lady, who had as a visitor a distant relative. This visitor was the most beautiful woman whom I have ever met."

A peculiar look came into Maria Reynolds' face. The General saw it and quickly divined her surmise.

"You are far from the truth," said he; "she did not become my wife. She died in less than two years after our first meeting. I loved her and told her so. She did not confess her love for another, but rejected me. It was not long before I found out that she loved my rival, but I could not ascertain whether or not he was her accepted suitor.

"His visits to her were so numerous and so prolonged that they attracted the attention of others, and rumors derogatory to the reputation of the young lady soon became the gossip of society. As soon as these rumors reached her ears, she sought refuge in some town far removed from the city. I discovered her hiding place, but it was too late. The old woman who had been her nurse and companion told me that she was dead.

## AT "THE GRANGE"

"You can imagine, Mrs. Reynolds, that I prefer to have in my heart the memory of the pure love that I entertained for that woman rather than the feelings of shame and remorse—if he has not become invulnerable to such feelings—which must fill the breast of my rival—her heartless and merciless seducer."

Mrs. Reynolds expressed her appreciation of her host's honorable motives and feelings and her detestation of his rival's infamous conduct in the most expressive way in which a woman can—with her eyes.

"I felt," the General went on, "that as such conduct could not be reached directly by military law it was my duty as an honorable man to secure indirectly the meting out of a proper punishment. I held a high rank in the army and was close to the ear of the Commander-in-Chief. In this way I was able to prevent the rapid promotion of my rival, and whatever advancement in rank he secured was long delayed and grudgingly bestowed. These facts became apparent to both his friends and foes, for there was no disputing his personal bravery, for he was daring almost to hardihood."

The young girl's eyes grew brilliant when she heard these words, for her father had been a soldier in the Revolution. She was his only child, and she remembered how she had sat upon his knee and listened to the stories of the battles in which he had been engaged.

"After the war was over," the General con-

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tinued, "our personal contests were transferred from the battlefield to the court room, where, both having been admitted to the bar and both being citizens of the state of New York, we were qualified to practise in all of its courts, both state and national. I was his superior in oratory and could influence a jury more strongly than he could; but he excelled me, I must confess, in the summing up of evidence, and his closing argument always had a great effect upon the judge and influenced him in making his charge to the jury. So, oftentimes, my influence with the jury was overbalanced by the effect of my rival's words upon the mind of the judge."

"You were pretty evenly matched, then," Mrs. Reynolds ventured to remark.

The General did not reply to this, but continued his story:

"There was still another field of warfare in which we were destined to meet, less circumscribed than the court room; in fact, as wide as the nation itself. The game we played was that of politics, and I must confess that he has taken many more tricks than I, for political successes have been showered thick and fast upon him. Even as I looked down on him when I was his superior in the army, now he looks down upon me, as he sits far above me in the political forum. I have not lost all hope of future political preferment, but he opposes me, and you may naturally infer that I am still opposed to him. He has some means by which he finds out my secrets and is able to checkmate

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me when I think that success is assured. I must fight him with his own weapons."

"And you wish me," cried Mrs. Reynolds, "to become a spy upon the doings of this man?"

"Exactly," said Hamilton; "he employs women who are bound to him by strong ties, and I must follow the same method. Of course," he continued, "the tie that binds us is a purely business one. You are to perform certain services, for which I will pay you a stipulated sum."

"And how long will my employment last?" was Mrs. Reynolds' next inquiry.

The General pushed back his chair from its close proximity to the one occupied by Mrs. Reynolds. Her hands rested in her lap. She clasped and unclasped them nervously, and her heightened color showed either that she was ready and willing to enlist in the General's service or that the duties were repugnant to her and the position would be refused. Hamilton saw that her mind was in a state of indecision. She was wavering, but it was uncertain what course she would conclude to follow.

Gazing at her fixedly, as he would have done at twelve stolidly honest men facing him in the jury box, he said in his most oratorical manner as he arose to his feet:

"As long as my rival lives! I often think that it would be better if one of us were dead. As long as he lives, he will be my rival; and as long as I live, I shall oppose him with every instrument that God, man, or the devil may place in my hands."

## THE CLIMAX

Mrs. Reynolds mused a few moments; then she looked up and asked, "Who is this man?"

"Colonel Aaron Burr," was Hamilton's reply.

Again she seemed in deep thought. "And what will you pay me?" she asked, finally.

Hamilton knew that the battle was won. "I will give you," he said, "fifty dollars the month, and, besides, pay all your expenses and necessary outlays for the services of others whose help you may need. This will enable you to secure proper care for your child and lay by something for a rainy day. None of it is to be paid your husband. If you choose to give it to him after it is in your possession, that is your affair, not mine."

The young woman arose and extended her hand, which Hamilton took in his.

"I will serve you," she said simply.

"That is good as far as it goes," cried Hamilton, "but you must go farther. Down on your knees, woman!" and his voice was deep and strenuous, "and raise your right hand to heaven. Swear to me by your faith in God and by your hopes of heaven that you will be true to my interests in thought and word and deed; that you will give to my service the best efforts of your body, mind, and soul, and that the judgment of God may be visited upon you if you prove recreant to the trust I impose in you."

"I swear!" cried the young woman. Then she covered her face with her hands and falling prone upon the floor began to sob bitterly.

## CHAPTER IV.

### HEAD OF THE ARMY.

TWO years had passed away. The political revolution of the state of New York was accomplished, and Burr and his adherents were so firmly intrenched in every state office and in every National one within the limits of New York that his position was impregnable. Then, and not until then, did he visit the city of his former triumphs—Washington.

He called upon President Jefferson to present his compliments and was accorded a private interview. When seated in the presence of the Chief Executive, he said:

"I have come, Mr. President, to have a plain talk with you."

Jefferson, who had been sitting at ease in his armchair and who had not arisen from this posture when his distinguished visitor was announced, now raised his long, lank figure into a position more indicative of receptivity, but he did not extend his hand as a token of welcome. Probably this act of courtesy was not anticipated, for Gov. Burr had made no overture himself looking to such an indication of mutual friendship.

Jefferson turned his watery-blue eyes toward his



## *THE CLIMAX*

visitor and ran his hand through the shock of caroty-red hair which had begun to show traces, here and there, of silvery whiteness. Finally, he spoke in his usual bland tone.

"The Governor of the state of New York is always welcome at the Executive Mansion and his opinions are entitled to respectful consideration."

"I do not come," said Burr, "in my official capacity as Governor of New York. I come as a citizen of the United States—one who, until the conclusion of the thirty-sixth ballot in the House of Representatives in the year 1801, was your political equal in every respect. Perhaps if the illegal vote of the state of Georgia had not been counted by you in your own favor, I should have been then and now your political superior."

Before the President could reply to this speech, Burr continued:

"During the continuance of this conversation, Mr. President, I do not ask you to affirm or deny anything; but I would advise you to say nothing, leaving to the future the determination of the truth of our respective statements."

The President nodded and Burr went on:

"You know as well as I do, Mr. President, that the attacks made upon President Adams by James Cheetham, if not directly instigated by General Hamilton, were secretly approved and endorsed by him. It was by the merest chance that this scurrilous and abusive pamphlet came into my possession. I was walking down Broadway one morning to my office when I met a boy with a

## HEAD OF THE ARMY

basket of pamphlets upon his arm. Impelled by a curiosity that I could not restrain, I took up one of them and looked at it. I immediately realized that its publication would reflect upon our party and injure its prospects materially. I took steps at once to suppress its circulation. In this I succeeded, but it turned loose upon me torrents of abuse to which I have made no reply."

A stolid expression had settled upon the face of President Jefferson, but he made no reply. He had evidently made up his mind to follow the advice given him by his New York visitor.

Gov. Burr went on: "I do not accuse you, Mr. President, of instigating the attacks made upon me by Cheetham in connection with the Wood pamphlet, but I know as well as you do that you are responsible, directly or indirectly, for the subsequent tirades of abuse in which Cheetham indulged in his paper, *The American Citizen*.

The President could restrain himself no longer, but broke forth:

"You have no proof that I did anything of the kind, Mr. Burr."

"True; I have no proof," was the reply. "Neither did President Washington have any absolute proof that you were the instigator of a series of attacks made upon him in his administration by Philip Freneau while you were Secretary of State. But President Washington believed in his heart that you were responsible, and for once, at least, the late President and myself are in accord."

## *THE CLIMAX*

A man once having carried his point by means of an anonymous attack is not likely to voluntarily give up the use of so potent a weapon.

"Now let us speak," said Burr, "about a matter more purely personal in its nature. You know as well as I do that, a short time after I became Vice-President, not only the Federalist but the Republican newspapers accused me of being a party to a trade, the object of which was to make me President instead of yourself.

"At the time the election was taking place in the House of Representatives, I was busily engaged at my residence at Richmond Hill in arranging the festivities occasioned by the marriage of my only daughter Theodosia to Mr. Alston of South Carolina. I was approached by no one and addressed no one on the subject. The Federalists held the balance of power and naturally looked at you and at me to see which of us was the least objectionable. I am really glad that by their choice they showed that, in their opinion, you were to be preferred. The knowledge that I am objectionable to the Federalists always gives me satisfaction."

The President moved uneasily in his capacious armchair, but did not break the silence.

"Mr. President," said Burr, "you know as well as I do, or you should know better than I do, who it was that made the dicker with the Federalist party. What I am going to say I shall not make public. I have settled part of my open account with the man who has villified and abused me for

## *HEAD OF THE ARMY*

the past thirty years; I will close that account when an opportune time arrives. But my open account with you, Mr. President, I propose to have settled today, and I am going to tell you why you will be perfectly willing to accede to my modest demand."

Again the President raised himself in his arm-chair and regarded his visitor with a look expressive of astonishment, aversion, and apprehension.

"You know," said Burr, "that Mr. Bayard of Delaware and Mr. Smith of Maryland both called upon you and presented a proposition which would break the deadlock. You may deny these facts to all but me and I shall say nothing; but I have learned that you agreed to withdraw your opposition to the funding of the national debt; that you agreed not to oppose the construction of a navy; and that you agreed to retain in their positions the Collectors of Customs at Wilmington and at Philadelphia. Do not deny it, Mr. President, for your denial will have no weight with me."

Gov. Burr arose from his chair, and, walking to a window at the farthest end of the room, fixed his eyes upon the blue Potomac. How like a river life was! In its infancy, a little purling brook; in its youth, augmented by small tributary streams, it expands and widens and increases in volume; on it rushes until joined by a tributary stream, when, like man and woman united in marriage, they go on together in close companionship; finally the end of the course is reached and the river, like man and woman, falls into the ocean of eternity.

## *THE CLIMAX*

Considering that the President had had plenty of time for reflection, Gov. Burr retraced his steps and resumed his seat.

"What is your wish?" the President asked.

Burr declined a re-election as Governor of New York. At this time to be nominated by the Republican party was equivalent to an election. The nominee was a great personal admirer and devoted political adherent of Aaron Burr and one capable of holding firmly the reins which the retiring Governor would place in his hands.

A few days before Burr's term of office as Governor of New York expired, he was appointed by President Jefferson to command the army of the United States. Aaron Burr had taken another step upon the ladder of fame which was to lead him to the climax of his ambition. He was now the head of the army, and while he retained that position, all things were possible.

## CHAPTER V.

### DEEP ROOTED PREJUDICE.

WHEN the news of the appointment of Aaron Burr as General of the army reached the old town of Litchfield, Connecticut, it gave rise to an animated discussion between the members of the two opposing parties — the Republicans and Federalists.

As in the other New England states, the line between the adherents of these two parties resembled a deep chasm, or, more properly speaking, a river of fire. If a Republican wished the services of a lawyer he would travel ten miles, if necessary, to find one of his own political faith. If a Federalist lay upon a bed of sickness he would have preferred death rather than preserve life through the ministrations of a Republican doctor.

The ministers united politics with their religion, and thus such combinations as a Republican Orthodox or a Federalist Presbyterian were more common than rare.

It is but natural that such deeply-rooted prejudices should find expression when members of the different political parties met, and, from some cause or other, engaged in the discussion of public questions.

## *THE CLIMAX*

It was a warm spring evening, just after supper, and the crowd of loungers who usually gathered at the general store to pass the evening in gossip or debate, had followed their usual custom. Within, the store seemed dark and stuffy, and, for that reason, the company had either gathered upon the platform which ran the whole length of the store, or had thrown themselves upon the grass plot which reached from it to the dusty road. Among the company which had collected there was Solomon Priestley, the village blacksmith, a man apparently a little over fifty years of age. He was of large size, sturdily built, and the muscles in his arms, which were like whipcords, showed through his shirt sleeves, which, moistened by perspiration, clung closely to his brawny arms, whose great strength they formed. Another was Jacob Carruthers, a retired farmer, and reputed to be the wealthiest man in the town. He was obliged to acknowledge his age as sixty-five, for the record of his birth had been discovered in the village church, and the information had become public property. He was slight in stature, not yet infirm, with a sharp, weazened face and a high-pitched voice.

The third, Abiel Budlong, or "Abe," as he was called by everybody in the town, did not look to be a day over forty years of age, although in reality he was nearly fifty. Of medium stature, compactly built, with a clear, bright eye and the flush of health upon his cheek, he was a man to attract the attention of a newcomer in town. Besides, he had

## *DEEP ROOTED PREJUDICE*

evidently read much about the world and had seen much of it with his own eyes; for in the village open-air debate which followed he showed that he had a full stock of facts to support the arguments which he advanced.

Timothy Barstow, the proprietor of the store, a big, fat, red-faced, jolly sort of man, came to the open door and said, as he held out a newspaper:

"Have yer heerd the news? I was only six years old when Aaron Burr, and Abe thar and the rest of the boys went off to fight the Britishers; but I was twelve afore the war was over, and I allus said as how Aaron Burr would come out on top afore he got through, and the paper says that President Jefferson has appinted him Ginerol of the army."

"Hurrah!" cried Abe. "Three cheers for General Burr!"

About half the company present joined Abe in this testimonial of satisfaction at the honor bestowed upon a former townsman. It will be readily assumed that those who gave the cheers were Republicans, while those who remained mute were undoubtedly Federalists. Those who had declined to join in the cheering looked toward Priestley and Carruthers inquiringly, evidently anticipating that one or the other of them would become the spokesman of their party.

Solomon Priestley took a piece of plug tobacco from one pocket and a knife from the other. Cutting off a large piece, he placed it in his mouth, and, after getting it settled therein to his satisfaction, ejaculated:



## THE CLIMAX

"Wall, I never did think much of Thomas Jefferson, and I can't say as how I think his appointment of Aaron Burr is any perticular honor ter him, or ter this town. Course, that's only my opinion, but I've got a right to it, and I'm not one o' those who's afraid to say what he thinks."

This somewhat defiant speech was greeted with signs of approval by the Federalists.

"Them's my sentiments kerzactly," piped old man Carruthers, and his thin, squeaky voice formed such a marked contrast to the deep, sonorous tones of Solomon Priestley that both Republicans and Federalists burst into a hearty laugh.

"When yer want ter hear anythin' bad of a man," said Abe, "yer want to go and talk with the people who've lived in the same town with him, particularly when they know that he was a darned sight smarter'n anybody else in the place."

With unconscious egotism, he continued: "When I leave town, I s'pose most of you fellers'll go ter backbitin' me and enjoy yerselves that way, till I come back agin. Then you'll shet up, fer you know it wouldn't be healthy for any one or even two of yer ter say such things ter my face."

"Wall, if I said it," ejaculated Solomon Priestley, "I don't think I'd have to count any one with me."

The onlookers began to prick up their ears, for there seemed to be a prospect of the discussion coming to blows.

"Oh, I don't fight with blacksmiths," said Abe, with a laugh, "'specially with you, Solomon, for

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yer know you didn't go ter war, and don't know what real fightin' is."

This sharp sally was greeted with a roar of laughter by the Republicans.

"Now, I tell yer," said Abe, "thar wasn't a better fighter in the army than Aaron Burr. He could jest take a lot of raw recruits and whip 'em inter shape quicker'n any other man in the army. He'd make 'em toe the mark, pint their eyes jest right, and hold a gun as if they wasn't afraid on't. I've eat with him, slept with him, and fit with him, and it's my opinion that if he hadn't been sot down on by a gang led by that foreigner Hamilton thet he'd proved himself to be the Napoleon of America."

"We don't want no Napoleons in this country," squeaked Carruthers. "We'd better hev kept Benedict Arnold than hev him."

"You know what I mean, Jake," replied Abe, "but yer twist things so as ter suit your side of the case. The fact is, yer don't know any more about Napoleon than yer do about Arnold, and there's somethin' to be said in his favor, bad as he was."

"Oh, no doubt you can give him a good character," said Priestley, with a sneer.

"That's more'n I can do fer some people **that** I meet every day," was Abe's rejoinder.

"Wall, I happen to know from a feller who wus at Saratoga, thet if it wasn't fer Arnold we'd hev got a lickin' there, and it's my private opinion that with Washington in between Clinton and Burgoyne, that there'd been a smash-up and some

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of you fellers would have been yelling for King George, same as yer did afore we started to jine Washington."

Here Barstow, the storekeeper, broke in:

"Don't git excited, boys. It's too pesky hot. As fer me, I don't take much stock in Jefferson because he was down on the Cincinnati. I happen to know that he wrote to one feller, praising it up to the skies, and to another one he said that it was the biggest cuss to the country. Fer he said he knew that one of these days the Cincinnati would turn monarchists and put a king on the throne of America."

"Well," said Priestley, "I guess business wouldn't suffer any more if we had a king than it did when Congress was fighting as to whether they'd elect Jefferson or Burr."

"If I'd been thar," cried Abe, "there'd been a bigger fight than thar was, leastways if I'd known what I do now. I happen to know thet Jefferson bought his election and paid for it in promises to you Federalists, and what's more'n that, he stole it, fer he counted in a certificate that wasn't filled in right and that's what gave him his election."

"Wall, I declare," said Jake Carruthers. "You're a mighty fine specimen of a Republican, I must say. It's no wonder thet yer don't git a government job."

"Well, yer see, Jake," said Abe, "the Republican party is got two wings; one on 'em is a Jefferson wing, and t'other one is a Burr wing, and it so happens jest now thet I'm snugglin' in under

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thet Burr wing. When the Burr wing begins to flop the Republican bird will rise and Abe Budlong'll go with it."

"All ye've said may be true," remarked Priestley, "but I don't believe it. I, for one, think that General Hamilton should have the place instid of Burr."

"I don't see no reason why Hamilton should hev it, unless it's because he's out of a job," was Abe's reply.

"Come, boys," cried Barstow. "I'm goin' to close up shop. Stop yer jaw, and some of you fellers give me a hand on puttin' up these shutters."

What Timothy Barstow had said was undoubtedly true; the warfare of words which took place nightly, inside or outside of his store, usually ended in a draw, because each side was so deeply prejudiced that argument and even proof fell upon unwilling and consequently unheeding ears, and so it always has been; the failure of words to settle vexed questions has led to the use of force, and the victories obtained by force unfortunately are not always founded upon argument or truth, but, as Napoleon said, "on the strongest battalions."

Abe, Solomon, and Jake started toward home together.

"The boys'll be down on me fer keepin' company with my enemies," said Abe. "They'll say it's all right to go with one fer purposes of argument, but if I go with two, it'll be because I like 'em."

## THE CLIMAX

This remark, although spoken in a jocular manner, was resented by Carruthers.

"I've had enough of yer company fer one evenin', anyway, Budlong, and if any one twits yer with likin' me, yer can jest say that there's no love lost atween us."

As he said this, he left his companions and turned into a side road which made his walk home at least a mile longer.

"I'm sorry I hurt Jake's feelin's," said Abe, "but the fact is, Solomon, I want to have a serious talk with yer. When anything's on my mind, I allus say there's no time like the present."

"I feel 'bout the same's Jake does," was the reply. "I've talked 'nuff fer one evenin', and 'less it's very important, I guess you'd better put it off till tomorrer night."

"No," said Abe, "it's one o' those matters that'll spile if it's kept too long. I don't know whether you've suspected anythin' or whether she's told yer, but the fact is your darter Phoebe has consented to become Mrs. Abe Budlong."

Solomon Priestley stopped short; Abe followed his example, and the two men faced each other.

"She's no right ter make any sech promise," said Priestley. "She ain't of age, and she can't git married without my consent till she is. I fancy that settles the hull matter."

"I kinder reckon I git on ter your meanin'," said Abe. "It's about the same as sayin' that you won't give your consent to her marryin' me, and that bein' the case, my cake is dough. What ob-

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jection have you got to me personally, 'cept that I am a go-to-war Republican and you a stay-at-home Federalist?"

"Yer too old," growled Solomon.

"Wall, if thet's so," said Abe, "then Jake Caruthers is out o' the race, too. Who've yer got in yer mind?"

"When I pick out a husband fer Phoebe," said Solomon, "it'll be a man that I'll be satisfied with, and I guess if I'm satisfied it won't take long to fix matters."

This last remark was delivered in such a contemptuous tone that a great change was at once wrought in Abe's manner. Shaking his fist in Solomon Priestley's face, he cried at the top of his voice:

"Phoebe loves me; she's told me so. She's willin' to wait till I'm ready to marry her. Let me tell yer, Solomon Priestley, by the great horn-spoon, if you try to make Phoebe Priestley marry any one but me there'll be a deed done in this town that'll attract more attention than the battle of Bunker Hill!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### SOME DISAGREEABLE LETTERS.

MARIA REYNOLDS returned home after her interview with Gen. Hamilton at The Grange in a state of great nervous excitement. The story which she had heard, told with so much vehemence and passion, had startled her. When she was obliged to take the oath, for she could not resist the command of Hamilton, she was absolutely terrified.

Although pretty in face, graceful in form and winsome in manner, she was but a country girl after all, and unused to such methods and powers of persuasion as Hamilton had used in his interview with her. As hundreds of stronger men and women might have done, she succumbed to the tones of his impressive voice and the influence of his personal magnetism. When she reached home she broke down completely and again cried bitterly—she could not have told why.

What concern of hers was it who the man was that her employer wished her to spy upon? What difference did it make to her whether it was Aaron Burr or any other man—or woman, so far as that went? She had married a man who had turned out to be a worthless fellow. From some cause,

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probably his own fault, he had lost several lucrative positions which he had secured and he told her that it was impossible for him to procure another. She must have shelter for herself and little girl, clothing to wear and food to eat. How were these to be obtained, if her husband contributed nothing to her support, unless she secured them for herself? Gen. Hamilton wished to employ her, to pay her traveling expenses, and would give her wages, or salary, whichever it might be called, sufficient for her present needs.

After her emotions had subsided somewhat, she looked at the matter in a more rational manner, and concluded that there was no course for her to follow except the one which had been so providentially opened to her.

Hamilton had wished to assail his enemy at once, but success always surrounds a victor with a cordon of friends and favorable circumstances. Hamilton sought for a vulnerable point in his rival's armor, but, for a long time, there seemed no way of finding an opening by which his enemy could be wounded.

During this time, his interviews with Mrs. Reynolds were numerous and prolonged. They occurred often at his business office, but his assistants, Messrs. Putney and Griggs, waited in vain for the appearance of those briefs which would disclose the name of the General's pretty client and the cause for her frequent visits. For other conferences, a place of rendezvous was selected by Hamilton. Until Mrs. Hamilton's return from



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her visit at Albany, on several evenings, long discussions had taken place at The Grange as to the best time and means for beginning active operations. One day, Mrs. Reynolds having remarked that her husband had gone to Washington with the hope of securing a position there, Hamilton suggested that their next interview should be at her house, and to this arrangement Mrs. Reynolds acceded.

If, when walking under a cloudless sky, with the sun shining in the heavens, a flash of lightning had blinded his eyes, Gen. Hamilton could not have been more astonished than he was one morning when, soon after entering his business office, a small boy entered and handed him a crumpled letter. Without waiting for a possible reply, the messenger, as though governed by positive and oft-repeated instructions, ran from the room before any inquiry could be made of him by the recipient of the letter.

The letter was unevenly folded and rather clumsily sealed, the wax bearing the imprint of the end of a thimble. Hamilton knew from whom the letter came. He recognized the writing at once, for the hand that penned it had written down many a sheet of instructions which he had given to her. But why had she written him? Although they had met often and every conversation had been of long duration, he had never written a line to her nor had he suggested that she should write to him, for the need of any correspondence was not apparent. In fact, it was dangerous, for, if

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found out, it might lead to unpleasant predicaments and possible serious complications.

Hamilton turned the letter over and over. Suddenly it occurred to him that on one occasion she had sent a letter to him at The Grange by a messenger and he remembered that the next time they met he had cautioned her not to send any more letters to his house.

Possibly he thought of his past relations with Mrs. Reynolds and there might have come into his mind an idea of what the letter contained. But he was a man of too much self-possession to spend much time upon surmises, and, breaking the seals, he unfolded the sheet of paper and read the following:

Col. Hamilton:

Dear Sir:—I have not tim to tell you the cause of my present troubles only that Mr. has rote you this morning and I know not wether you have got the letter or not and he has swore that If you do not answer It or If he dose not se or hear from you to day he will write Mrs. Hamilton he has just Gone oute and I am a Lone I think you had better come here one moment that you May know the Cause then you will the better know how to act Oh my God I feel more for you than myself and wish I had never been born to give you so mutch unhappiness do not rite to him no not a Line but come here soon do not send or leave anything in his power.

Maria.

## THE CLIMAX

Hamilton arose from his chair, muttering as he did so:

"What fools women are! Can her husband have followed her and become aware of our meetings, or is she, after all, an adventuress who has turned traitress now to aid her husband in his attempts to extort money from me?"

He looked at his watch.

"I must be in court at once. I am in poor condition to conduct so important a case as I have this morning, especially when I have to meet such an antagonist as Van Ness, the Attorney-General. I certainly shall not go to see her. That would be an unpardonable folly. I will await the arrival of her husband's letter. Perhaps, after all, he has not written any such letter, and this is but a woman's plot to get me to visit her."

But after the court was adjourned and he returned to his office, he was undeceived so far as he might have thought that James Reynolds had not written him. The letter had arrived during his absence. Though poorly written, badly spelled and couched in ungrammatical language, Hamilton knew that the accusations it contained were true.

He read it once; then, turning to the first page, he read these words carefully for the second time:

Sir:—I am very sorry to find out that I have been so Cruelly treated by a person that I took to be my best friend instead of that my greatest Enemy. You have deprived me of everything thats

### *SOME DISAGREEABLE LETTERS*

near and dear to me, I discovered whenever I Came into the house, after being out I found Mrs. Reynolds weeping I ask'd her the Cause of being so unhappy. She always told me that she had bin Reding, and she could not help Crying when she Red any thing that was Afecting. but seing her Repeatedly in that Setevation gave me some suspicion to think that was not the Cause, as fortain would have it. before matters was carred to two great a length. I discovered a letter directed to you which I copied of and put it in the place where I found it without being discovered by Her. and then the evening after. I was Curious enough to watch her. and see give a leter to a Black man in Market Street. which I followed him to your door. after that I Returned home some time in the evening, and I broached the matter to her and Red the Copy to her which she fell upon her knees and asked forgiveness and discovered everything to me Respectfing the matter and ses that she was unhappy. and not knowing what to do without some assistance. She called on you for the lone of some money. which you toald her you would call on her the Next Evening. which accordingly you did. and there Sir you took the advantage of a poor Broken harted woman. instead of being a Friend. you have acted the part of the most Cruelist man in existence. you have made a whole family miserable. She ses there is no other man that she Care for in this world. now Sir you have bin the Cause of Cooling her affections for me. She was a woman. I should as soon sespect an angiel from heaven.

## THE CLIMAX

and one where all my happiness was depending. and I would Sarefise almost my life to make her Happy. but now I am determined to have satisfaction. it shant be onely one family thats miserable. For I am Robbed of all happiness in this world I am determined to leve her. and take my daughter with me that Shant see her poor mother Lot. now Sir if I Cant see you at your house call and see me. for there is no person that Knowes any thing as yet. And I am tiremd to see you, by some means or other. for you have made me an unhappy man for eve. put it to your own case and Reflect one moment. that you should know shush a thing of your wife. would not you have satisfaction yes. and so will I before one day passes me more. I am yours,  
James Reynolds.

Conflicting emotions and thoughts ran quickly through Hamilton's mind. Should he answer this communication? It was couched in general terms and hinted at the possibility of a settlement. The only settlement that the husband could expect, under the circumstances, was, of course, a pecuniary one. To what extent, in a money sense, would he push his advantage? If he wrote a letter in reply, it would be impossible to frame it in such a manner that it would not implicate him in the minds of even unprejudiced persons. No, the safest course was for him to remain silent and vouchsafe no reply. Either the man would make up his mind that he was flying at too high a mark or else he would put his hints as to compensation

### *SOME DISAGREEABLE LETTERS*

for his wounded feelings into a more definite form.

Hamilton's conclusion was correct. In a few days he received a second letter.

Sir:—I now have taken till tuesday morning to Consider on What Steps will be Best for me to take. I should not have let the matter Rested till then, if it had not been for the news of the death of my Sister. which it Semes as if all my troubles are Comming on me in one moment. if it had been any other person except yourself, that treated me as you have done. I should not have taken the trouble to Call on them more than once. but your being in the Station of life you are. induces me to way every Surcomcance well Respecting the matter it will be impossible for me ever to think of liveing or Reconsiling myself to Stay with a woman that I no has plased her affections on you. and you know if you Reflect one moment. that you have been the sole Cause of it. I have all Reason in the world to believe its true. I am that man that will always have Satisfaction by some means or other when treated ill. Especially when I am treated in the mannor, as you have done. you may rest ashured that the matter as yet is Not known. If think proper to Call at the sign of the George tuesday morning at 8 oclock I will be there. for your house or office is no place to converse about these matters. if that is not agreeable to you. let me know what place I shall see you at. at that time, for I am determined to know what corse I shall take, more miserable I cant be than I am at present. let the consequence be as it will, for

## THE CLIMAX

when I come into the house. I find the wife always weeping and praying that I wont leve her. And its all on your account. for if you had not seeked for her Ruin it would not have happined. Could you not have Relieved the disstressed without transgressing in the mannor you have done. Certainly you did not show the man of honnor. in taking advantage of the afflicted, when Calling on you as a father and protector in the time of disstress. put that home to yourself and tell me what you would do in such a Case. or what amend Could be made to you or wether it would be possible to make any. you will answer no. it be impossible after being Robbed of all your happiness and your whole family made misseable. I know you are a man thats not void of feeling. I am not a man that wishes to do any thing Rashly, or plunge myself into Ruin. now if you think proper to se me at the place I have mentioned. or any other. please to let me no before. for I wish to be by ourselfs where we Can converse together. for if you do not Call on me or let me no where I Can see. you at that time. I shant call on you after this  
I am yours

James Reynolds.

Mr. Alexander Hamilton.

To this letter, Hamilton decided to reply, not by letter but in person. The contrast between these two men was great as they sat facing each other across a table in a small private room in the tavern. On one side of the table was a man of

### SOME DISAGREEABLE LETTERS

small stature, meanly dressed, and having in his face that combined look of a victim of circumstances and of a possessor of a secret which might improve those circumstances. His face showed those signs of uneasiness which are common when a man is almost sure of success, but who is yet fearful that some unexpected event may deprive him of his vantage.

On the other side of the table sat a man but little taller than his companion, but whose features still showed the possession of great power, both physical and mental, whose very posture and look denoted that he had been a great man even if he had of late fallen considerably from his former high estate.

A gallant soldier in the war of the Revolution, Washington's most trusted friend, his most valued adviser, a man who had done so much to secure the adoption of the Constitution of the United States and to build up its credit, a man who had been the champion and avowed representative of the monarchial or pro-British feeling in the country now sat at the mercy of a man who was base enough to profit pecuniarily by his wife's wrongs and mean enough to accept such money as a balm for his wounded feelings.

Several days after this meeting, Hamilton received a third letter from Reynolds in which it will be seen the *quid pro quo* was definitely stated.

Sir:—When we were last together you then would wis to know my Determination what I



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would do and. you expess a wish to do any thing that was in your power to Serve me. its true its in your power to do a great deal for me, but its out of your power to do any thing that will Restore to me my Happiness again for if you should give me all you possess would not do it. god knows I love the woman and wish every blessing may attend her, you have bin the Cause of Winning her love, and I Dont think I Can be Reconciled to live with Her, when I know I hant her love. now Sir I have Considered on the matter Serously. I have this preposial to make to you. give me the Sum of thousand dollars and I will leve the town and take my daughter with me and go where my Friend Shant here from me and leve her to Yourself to do for as you thing proper. I hope you wont think my request is in a view of making Me Satisfaction for the injury done me. for there is nothing that you Can do will compensate for it. your answer I shall expect This evening or in the morning early, as I am Determined to wate no longer till. I know my lot

Yours

James Reynolds.

Mr. Alexr. Hamilton.

## CHAPTER VII.

### HUSH MONEY.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON had passed through many perils in safety during his adventurous life. He had escaped the fury of a tornado which devastated the island on which he lived when a youth; he had escaped capture by pirates in the Spanish main on his way to the American colonies; he had been a brave man in battle, but had escaped unharmed. Before the bar and in the halls of legislation, although the weapons used were not deadly, he had met and parried attacks, and had often been victorious when he took the offensive; but never in his life had he faced so formidable an antagonist, and one with whom he felt so ill-fitted to cope, as with this mean-spirited, craven-hearted individual who had fixed a price upon his wife's honor.

The opening of the eighteenth century had been signalized both by actual warfare and by rumors of coming wars. At the opening of the nineteenth, a great religious warfare was raging. The revulsion from Puritan asceticism had begun in America with the Revolution; in France with another Revolution; and a spirit of protest had spread through all the European countries. As is often

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the case, the pendulum had swung back from the farthest point on one side to the farthest point on the other. For the time being, there was no Golden Mean, no middle course.

With marked changes in religious belief, there also came marked changes in the social relations. The Puritans had taught chastity in thought, word, and action. It is not strange that the religious and social revolution affected these three elements of human personality. This is not said by way of excuse or palliation, but only in explanation. The only excuse or palliation cannot be found in general conditions, but only in individual cases, and then more by comparison than by consideration of a single case.

Reynolds' letter was a combination of cringing meanness and peremptory demand. With the former, Hamilton could not cope, but the latter must be met. He felt sure that, if Reynolds' demands for money were not promptly met, he would have to face public accusation instead of private.

Three days after the receipt of Reynolds' demand for money, Hamilton paid him the sum of six hundred dollars, taking a receipt therefor; two weeks after, he paid the remaining four hundred dollars and considered that the matter was settled.

But he was in the toils and not destined to escape so easily. When a good good man or a bad good man becomes the prey of a bad bad man, there is no definite time fixed for a final settlement. If Gen. Hamilton had consoled himself with the idea that the payment of the thousand

## *HUSH MONEY*

dollars would free him from any further trouble, he was soon to be undeceived and in a most uncomfortable manner.

For a time at least, the sum of a thousand dollars must have been a small fortune for Reynolds and his wife; but those unused to the possession of large sums of money can and do dissipate it much faster than those accustomed to handling it in large amounts. A period of comparative affluence, followed by one of comparative poverty, probably induced Mr. Reynolds to think that the mine which had been once so profitably worked might be made to yield more treasure.

Whether in writing the letter which follows, he was influenced by this motive or by a desire to contribute to his wife's happiness cannot be easily divined.

Sir:—I suppose you will be surprised in my writing to you Repeatedly as I do. but dont be Alarmed for its Mrs. R. wish to See you. and for my own happiness and hers. I have not the Least Objections to your Calling. as a friend to Boath of us. and must rely intirely on your and her honor. when I conversed with you last. I told you it would be disagreeable to me for you to Call, but Sence, I am pritty well Convinsed, She would onely wish to See you as a friend. and sence I am Reconciled to live with her, I would wish to do every thing, So dont fail in Calling as Soon as you Can make if Conveanant. and I Rely on your befriending me if there should anything Offer that

## THE CLIMAX

would be to my advantage. as you Express a wish  
to befriend me. So I am  
yours to Serve  
James Reynolds

Mr. Alexr. Hamilton.

A bird that has been once caught in a fowler's net or a trap and has finally escaped is suspicious ever afterwards of the earth and all that its surface contains. Man is much more intelligent than the feathered creation, and it is not strange that Mr. Reynolds' pleasant invitation to call again was not complied with, or that the letter received no reply.

Either of her own volition or prompted by her husband, Mrs. Reynolds then took up the pen to second her husband's invitation.

Sir:—I need not acquaint that I had Ben Sick all moast Ever sence I saw you as I am sure you allready no it Nor would I solicit a favor wich Is so hard to obtain were It not for the Last time Yes Sir Rest assured I will never ask you to Call on me again I have kept my Bed those tow dayes and now rise from My pilliow wich your Neglect has filled with the shorpest thorns I no Longer doubt what I have Dreaded to no but stop I do not wish you se you to to say any thing about my Late disappointment No I only do it to Ease a heart wich is ready Burst with Greef I can neither Eat or sleep I have Been on the point of doing the moast horrid acts at I shudder to think where I might been what will Become of me. In vain

## *HUSH MONEY*

I try to Call reason to aid me but alas ther Is no Comfort for me I feel as If I should not Con-  
tennue long and all the wish I have Is to se you  
once more that I may my doubts Cleared up for  
God sake be not so voed of all humannity as to  
deni me this Last request but if you will not Call  
some time this night I no its late but any tim be-  
tween this and twelve A Clock I shall be up Let  
me Intreat you If you wont Come to send me a  
Line oh my head I can rite no more do some-  
thing to Ease My heart or Els I no not what I  
shall do for so I cannot live Commit this to the  
care of my maid be not offended I beg.

Although this communication was not signed,  
Hamilton knew that it was from Mrs. Reynolds.  
Still he vouchsafed no reply, which fact soon led  
to the receipt of another letter, more strenuous  
in its tone, more pressing in its invitation, and  
much more particular as regarded details of the  
expected visit.

Dear Sir:—I have kept my bed those tow days  
past but find my self mutch better at presant  
though yet full distressed and shall till I se you  
fretting was the Cause of my Illness I thought you  
had been told to stay away from our house and  
yesterday with tears I my Eyes I begged Mr. once  
more to permit your visits and he told upon his  
honnour that he had not said anything to you and  
that It was your own fault believe me I scarce  
knew how to beleeve my senses and if my setura-

## THE CLIMAX

tion was insupportable before I heard this It was now more so fear prevents my saying more only that I shal be misarable till I se you and if my dear freend has the Least Esteeme for the unhappy Maria whos greatest fault Is Loving him he will come as soon as he shall get this and till that time My breast will be the seate of pain and woe  
adieu.

Col. Hamilton.

P. S. If you cannot come this Evening to stay just come only for one moment as I shal be Lone Mr. is going to sup with a friend from New York.

Hamilton was still obdurate. He told the maid to say to Mrs. Reynolds that if she wished for anything to let him know. All that Mrs. Reynolds evidently wished was a visit from him, and this fact she made plain in her next letter.

the Girl tells me that you said If I wanted any thing that I should write this morning alas my friend want what what can ask for but peace wich you alone can restore to my tortured bosom and do My dear Col hamilton on my kneese Let me Intreatee you to reade my Letter and Comply with my request tell the bearer of this or give her a line you need not be the least affraid let me not die with fear have pity on me my freend for I deserve it I would not solicit this favor but I am sure It cannot injure you and will be all the happiness I Ever Expect to have But oh I am disstressed more than I can tell My heart Is ready to burst

## *HUSH MONEY*

and my tears wick once could flow with Ease are  
now denied me Could I only weep I would thank  
heaven and bless the hand that

Hamilton cogitated over these letters late at night in his library after the members of his family were in bed. What could mean this persistency on the part of Mrs. Reynolds? Why was she so anxious that he should visit her? Could it be possible that his escapade had become known to some of his enemies and that Reynolds and his wife were conniving with them to secure his downfall and ruin? Perhaps, under these circumstances, it would be better for him to go and see her and find out whether there was any collusion between herself and husband and outside parties.

He made his visit in the evening and the next day received a letter from her husband.

Sir:—On my entering the Room the last evening. I found Mrs. Reynolds in a setuvation little different from distraction and for some time could not prevail on her to tell me the Cause. at last She informed me that you had been here likewise of a letter she had wrote you in a fright. which she needed not have don as I Never intended doing any thing I told her but did it to humble Her. for the imprudent language she made yuse of to me. and You may Rest ashured sir, that I have not a wish to do any thing that may give you or your family a moments pain I know not what you may think of me. but suppose yourself



## THE CLIMAX

for a moment in my setuvation. that your wife whom you tenderly love. should plase her affections on another object and hear her say. that all her happiness depends intirely on that object. what would you do in such a Case. would you have acted as I have don. I have Consented to things which I thought I never could have don. but I have dun it to make life tolerable. and for the sake of a person whose happiness is dearer to me than my own. I have another affliction added to the Rest that is almost insupportable. I find when ever you have been with her. She is Cheerful and kind. but when you have not in some time she is Quite to Reverse. and wishes to be alone by her self. but when I tell her of it. all her answer is she Cant help it. and hopes I will forgive her. shurely you Cannot wonder if I should act ever so imprudent. though at present if I could take all her Grief upon myself I would do it with pleasure. the excess of which alarm me untill now. I have had no idea of. I have spent this day at her bedside in trying to give her the Consolation which I myself stand in need of. she also tell me, you wish to see me tomorrow evening and then I shall Convince you. that I would not wish to trifle with you And would much Rather add to the happiness of all than to distress any

Am sir Your

James Reynolds

Mr. Alex. Hamilton.

## *HUSH MONEY*

Great soldier, lawyer, and statesman that he was, Gen. Hamilton was once more in the toils, a double victim—to a loving woman who loved unwisely and too well and to a designing and mercenary husband. When the visits were regular, the letters ceased; when the visits ceased, the letters came regularly. A long absence, caused by an enforced visit to another city, but which Hamilton did not deem it prudent to explain by letter, provoked a heart-broken epistle from the wife.

My dear friend :—In a state of mind which know language can paint I take up the pen but alas I know not what I write or how to give you an idea of the anguish wick at this moment rends my heart yes my friend I am doomed to drink the bitter cup of affliction Pure and unmixed but why should I repine why pour forth my wretched soul in fruitless complainings for you have said It you have commanded and I must submit tow heaven Inexorable heaven Is deaf to my anguish and has marked me out for the child of sorrow oh my dear friend wether shall I fly for consolation oh all all consolation is shut against me there is not the least gleme of hope but oh merciful God forgive me and you my friend Comply with this Last Request Let me once more se you and unbosom Myself to you perhaps I shal be happier after It I have mutch to tell wick I dare not write And which you ought to know oh my dear Sir give me your advice for once In an Affair on wick depends my Existence Itself Think not my friend that I say this to make you

## *THE CLIMAX*

come and se me and that I have nothing to tell  
you for heaven by which I declare knows that I  
have woes to relate wich I never Expected to have  
known accept by the name Come therefore tomor-  
row sometime or Els in the Evening do I beg you  
to come gracious God had I the world I would  
lay It at your feet If I could only se you oh I must  
or I shall lose my senses at It is not because I  
think to prevail on you to visit me again no my  
dear Col. Hamilton I do not think of It but will  
when I se you do just as you tell me so doant be  
offended with me for pleading so hard to se you  
If you do not think it proper to come here Let  
me know by a line where I shal se you and what  
hour you need not put your name to It or mine  
Either Just direct Mr. or Els leve It blank adieu  
my Ever dear Col hamilton you may form to  
yourself an Idea of my distress for I Cant desscribe  
It to you Pray for me and be kind to me Let me  
se you death now would be welcome Give

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE.

HAMILTON'S heart was not made of flint or steel and it is not to be wondered at that the prayer for a visit was complied with. As soon as apparent friendly relations were once more established between Gen. Hamilton and Mrs. Reynolds, the mercenary husband began making, either in person or by letter, appeals for more money. This money, as he said, was to procure the necessities of life for his family, and he constantly bewailed the "setivation" which forced him to ask such loans. For the money received, he gave notes and promised speedy payment. In this way, within a few days, he secured some ninety dollars.

Feeling, perhaps, that he had worked this vein of the mine as much as was advisable at that time, Mr. Reynolds took a new tack. He was indebted, so he said, in the sum of forty-five dollars to a man who threatened to take legal steps against him if he were not paid. He said in his letter that he owned some property in New York which he had instructed his brother to sell. When the money was received, Mr. Hamilton would be paid

## *THE CLIMAX*

in full. The kind-hearted General promptly supplied the needed forty-five dollars.

Mr. Reynolds now concluded that it was time to recur to his marital unhappiness. He wrote a letter in which he referred to his home surroundings. He spoke of coldness shown to him by his wife and took occasion to remind Gen. Hamilton that he was the cause of it. Before he closed the letter, his financial "setivation" so forcibly oppressed him that he asked for a loan of thirty dollars, which he received in due time.

Mr. Reynolds' next move was to show a disposition to engage in business. Now business of every kind requires capital, and Mr. Reynolds knew of no one to whom to apply for the needed capital except Gen. Hamilton. His modest request for three hundred dollars to invest in Turnpike Road Scrip was gratified; but, as soon as the money was invested, he informed the General that he could not sell out as he had intended to do because the market price was falling and he did not wish to lose his little savings. He coupled this financial information with a request for a further loan of fifty dollars, which he received and which, no doubt, satisfied his immediate needs.

Mr. Reynolds was later impressed with the necessity of engaging in some profitable occupation in order to earn enough to support his family. His next appeal was for two hundred dollars with which to furnish a boarding-house, as he had the promise of four genteel boarders. He expressed

## *A SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE*

the hope, which was no doubt re-echoed by the General, that something would soon turn up so that he would not be obliged to call upon his kind friend for any more money.

Hamilton now made up his mind that a stop must in some way be made to this constant drain upon his income. In response to a second request for the money, he went in person to deliver it. Reynolds, well-satisfied with his booty, left the house, ostensibly to purchase the necessary furniture to fit up the house for the accommodation of his expected boarders.

When he returned, late in the evening, he found to his surprise that his wife and child were not there. He had passed the evening at various taverns indulging in strong potations, and the full extent of his loss did not dawn upon him until he awakened the next morning. Where had his wife gone? He, at once, naturally connected Gen. Hamilton with her disappearance, but, upon going to the General's office, he learned that he had left the city to attend to some important legal business and probably would not return for a month.

The remainder of the money was squandered in dissipation, or rather, as Mr. Reynolds pathetically informed a boon companion, to drown his sorrow at the loss of his wife and child. When in a state of abject destitution, in fact, reduced to beggary, he by chance met a man whom he had once befriended and who, strange to say, was not ungrateful. This friend paid his passage to Washington

### *THE CLIMAX*

where, after several attempts to make an honest living, they combined their efforts to make a dishonest one and were finally lodged in jail. There they will be left while the fortunes of the missing wife are followed.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE WHITE SLAVE.

**G**EN. BURR proceeded at once to reorganize the army. He gathered about him the best disciplinarians that the country could supply and offered inducements to some of the old Revolutionary veterans to once more take the field. The army was recruited to the full size provided for by law; but when Burr requested President Jefferson to call upon Congress to increase its size, the demand was quickly made and promptly acceded to.

Then Burr proceeded at once to New Orleans to thoroughly investigate and understand the Southwestern situation. This act was viewed with apprehension by the Spanish authorities and caused a feeling of positive alarm throughout their American possessions. The proud Spanish Dons felt that their honor was at stake. They could not stand calmly by while the eyes of the other European nations were upon them and see these rich lands, which had cost them so much in blood and treasure to conquer, taken from them by a man who, it seemed to them, aimed to become the Cæsar of the West.

A demand, couched in peremptory language,



## *THE CLIMAX*

was made by the Spanish government that Gen. Burr should be at once called back from New Orleans and positive assurances given that no war-like designs were entertained by the United States as regarded either Texas or Mexico. The American government would have found itself overwhelmed by a tidal wave of adverse public opinion if it had acceded to what the newspapers called "the impudent demand of the arrogant Dons."

The warfire was lighted in city, town, and hamlet. Public meetings were called throughout the States and urgent appeals were forwarded to the President to keep Gen. Burr at his post. The wrongs of the oppressed Texans and Mexicans were recounted in the newspapers, preached from the pulpit, declaimed from public rostrums, and caused floods of oratory in both branches of Congress. Such a resistless indication of the condition of the public mind the administration was powerless to withstand, and its reply to the Spanish government, though worded in a conciliatory manner, stated positively that Louisiana was part of the American Union and that the presence of Gen. Burr in New Orleans was not a matter the right or propriety of which called for any consideration by the two governments.

The sensitive Dons considered from this reply that the United States was simply waiting for an opportunity to aid the Texans and Mexicans to throw off the yoke which held them down, and that, as soon as occasion offered, that opportunity would be seized.

## THE WHITE SLAVE

No reader of history can doubt the bravery of the Spaniards, whose valor has been proven on countless fields during centuries of conflict. It is not surprising that Spain, in her reply, plainly told the United States government that a refusal to comply with her demand would be considered a *casus belli*. This reply, when made known to the American public, raised a wild tumult of indignation throughout the country, and the House of Representatives with but six dissenting votes, all of which were cast by members from the New England states, declared that a state of war existed between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Spain.

Besides the regular army, thousands of volunteer riflemen from Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky rallied to Burr's standard. Gen. Jackson was appointed to an important command. Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor were attached to the staff of the commander-in-chief. No sooner was the word to advance given from Washington than Burr, with the impetuosity characteristic of him, entered Texas and bore down upon the Spanish forces.

The Spaniards and Mexicans who had been impressed into military service melted away like chaff before a blazing fire. Nothing could withstand the advance of the American army when led by the man who possessed the confidence of every officer and soldier. Gen. Burr was victorious in every engagement, and finally the Stars and Stripes were hoisted over the halls of the Montezumas, and Texas and Mexico became, by conquest, part of

## THE CLIMAX

the United States of America. Not only this great area, but that immense section of country stretching from northern Texas to Canada and from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, formed part of the great prize of victory.

But Burr and his victorious army did not stop here. He was a hundred years ahead of his time in thought, and his eye had seen the decided commercial advantage to the United States of controlling the Isthmus of Panama; so the conquering army moved forward and Central America and the Isthmus were soon added to the conquests already made. Forts were built and in them and at all important points garrisons were stationed; the conquered country was placed under martial law until such time as Congress could pass suitable legislation to provide a stable civil government. Then Burr and his victorious generals, accompanied by a portion of his army of veterans, started on their return to Washington to receive the plaudits of the nation.

During the campaign, Gen. Burr and his army had left the City of Mexico and had proceeded a day's march on their way to Central America when an incident occurred which touched the heart of the commander-in-chief and awakened his finer sensibilities. He and some of his generals and the members of his staff were at dinner when a woman's voice was heard outside the tent.

Her tones were piteous, but they produced no effect upon the sentries, who gruffly refused her admittance to the General's presence. She at-

## *THE WHITE SLAVE*

tempted to elude them and gain entrance to the tent, but was seized and handled roughly by one of the guard. The woman gave a piercing scream, which attracted Burr's attention, and he sent one of his aides to learn the cause of the disturbance.

Word was brought back that a white woman was endeavoring to gain admittance to the tent, but had been forced back by the sentries. She said that she had escaped from her master, a Spaniard, who had made her his slave, and she wished to claim protection, as she was a citizen of the United States. Burr at once gave orders that she should be admitted, and, a few minutes later, she stood before him and his companions, who had finished their dinner and were smoking their cigars and leisurely sipping their wine and stronger beverages.

The woman, who was young, was graceful in figure. Her eyes were red with weeping, and tears were seen trickling down her cheeks. She made a pretty and interesting picture as she stood there, with bowed head and downcast eyes, awaiting the command of the conqueror to tell her story. Burr looked at her for an instant; then he said:

"I will hear your story. What is your name?"

The young woman raised her eyelids and disclosed a pair of blue eyes. Her lips trembled as she began speaking, but she soon became more confident.

"My name is Thankful Macy. My father's name was Ephraim Macy. We were born in Nantucket. My father was captain of a vessel engaged in carry-

## THE CLIMAX

ing molasses from the West Indies to Boston. On our last trip from Boston, his ship, the American Eagle, was captured by pirates. My father and the crew fought desperately, and I was the only one who escaped alive. The pirate captain brought me to Vera Cruz and sold me to a Spaniard named Hermacillo.

"He is no more unkind to me than to his other slaves, but he is brutal to them all. I longed to regain my freedom, and when I heard that the American army had taken Mexico and was advancing southward, I determined to escape, even if my life paid the forfeit. This morning I got up at three o'clock, saddled a horse, and arrived in your camp only a short time ago. He will follow me, I know, and if he takes me back with him again, I am sure he will kill me. He told me one day that if any of his slaves ran away, he always killed them when he caught them. Don't let him take me back again!" she cried, and as she spoke she fell upon her knees and extended her clasped hands toward Burr.

The General lifted her to her feet and said: "Be not afraid, Miss Macy, that any such fate will befall you. You are an American citizen and entitled to our protection.

"Joseph," he said, turning to a handsome young man, who had sat at his right side at table, "I will write a letter tonight to Theodosia, committing this young woman to her care. Tomorrow, you will place her in charge of a reliable man with a suitable guard. Let her be taken to Mexico and

## *THE WHITE SLAVE*

instructions given there to the general in command to send her to New Orleans, and there confide his charge to Mrs. Alston. Come here, Joseph."

Turning to the young woman, he said: "Miss Macy, this is my son-in-law, Colonel Alston, the husband of my daughter, to whose charge I am going to confide you. We will meet you on our return, and she will care for you until then. If we do not return, she will care for you just the same."

The young woman thanked her deliverer in simple language which won the respect of all those who heard her words. Burr called an aide and, giving him some instructions in an undertone, bade the young woman accompany him.

As soon as she was gone, Burr resumed his seat at the table. As he did so, he remarked:

"There are no white slaves in America, and I hope before many years have passed by that there will be no black ones."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE.

**T**HANKFUL MACY in due season reached New Orleans under military escort. She was immediately conducted to the residence which had been occupied by Gen. Burr when he had first visited the city after his appointment to the command of the army, and which was now in the possession of his only daughter, Mrs. Theodosia Burr Alston. Her husband was with her father in the field, holding a position as colonel of cavalry.

Mrs. Alston's household, besides servants, which were numerous, consisted of her little son, her father's namesake, and of Mr. John Burbidge, his tutor. The mansion, which in times past had been occupied by a wealthy Creole family, was large, and the presence of Miss Thankful Macy in the household added but little to its cares.

She repeated to her hostess the story of her capture by pirates and her captivity, and little Aaron would not be satisfied until the story had been told over and over again. He became very fond of the new member of the household and spent all the time that he possibly could with her. She was evidently very fond of children, and Mrs. Alston,

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after due deliberation, could find no fault with the person who had been committed to her charge by her father.

About a week after Miss Macy reached New Orleans she wrote and mailed a letter to Mr. Thomas Macy, New York. In due time a reply was received. She had obtained it at the post-office and read it as she walked through the street on her way homeward. It must have contained sad tidings, for the reader, although in the public street and in sight of passers-by, burst into tears which she ineffectually tried to restrain.

When she reached home her eyes were telltale of what had occurred. When little Aaron plied question after question to learn the cause of her trouble, her only answer was to take the boy in her arms and press him tightly to her bosom, kissing him repeatedly.

The boy looked up and said: "You love little boys, don't you, Miss Macy? Don't you wish you had a little boy all of your own?"

To this inquiry, Miss Macy's answer was another fit of uncontrollable weeping, and little Aaron, greatly disturbed in mind, ran to his mother to bear the tidings. The next morning at breakfast, Miss Macy informed Mrs. Alston that the previous evening she had received news of the death of a very dear friend, and begged that she might be excused for the balance of the day, as she had many letters to write in relation to the matter. The entire day was devoted to writing, but the number of letters dwindled to one, a most bulky one, and



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that bore the address of Mr. Thomas Macy, New York.

There was no happier, prouder woman in America than little Mrs. Alston when she welcomed back her father and husband after the victorious campaign in Mexico and Central America. Miss Macy had greatly improved in appearance, and Burr and his son-in-law agreed one evening over their cigars that she was a very beautiful woman. The General, with that chivalry which was characteristic of him, invited her to accompany them to Washington, and the invitation was gratefully accepted.

It was the summer of 1808 when the great reception of Burr and his victorious generals took place at the nation's capital. The Americans were then, and always have been, idol worshipers, and Aaron Burr was the idol of the hour. By popular acclaim, he was nominated for the presidency, and the selection of delegates and the casting of ballots was of the *proforma* character, for the people had expressed their choice in advance and there was no clique of politicians strong enough to dispute the popular verdict. But if Burr had startled his political opponents by his military operations, he was to astonish them still further by the changes which he suggested in the Constitution of the United States.

President Burr sat in his private room in the White House. Ever since his advent into public life he had made the Constitution of the country and its adaptability to the wants of the people his

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study. He was now in a position to call attention to such changes as he, personally, deemed advisable, knowing that action thereon must be determined after due deliberation by the representatives of the people.

President Burr read through, carefully, from beginning to end, the message, which he had prepared. Then he threw the manuscript upon his table and leaned back with a look of satisfaction upon his face.

"That will give the politicians something to keep them busy for months to come," he soliloquized. "I did not make the Constitution. That was my friend Hamilton's work. He was the fine shoemaker, while I am but a poor cobbler; but the repairs I am suggesting may save the shoe from total destruction and enable the country to wear it for many years to come."

The President's quiet was broken in upon by an *attaché*, who informed him that a man wished to see His Excellency on very important business.

"I told him that you were engaged upon affairs of state; that this was not your day for receiving visitors; but he was importunate, and said that if I would but mention his name he was sure you would give him an audience."

"What is his name?" asked the President.

"Abiel Budlong," the *attaché* replied.

"Show him in at once," was the President's reply, and, almost immediately, Abe was ushered into the presence of the chief magistrate of the nation, the recipient of as much courtesy and

## THE CLIMAX

deference as though he had been an ambassador from some foreign power.

Abe waited until the door was closed. Then, with outstretched hand and face beaming with smiles, he advanced, crying out as he did so:

"How are yer, Aaron? I'm mighty glad to see yer!"

The President sprang to his feet and grasped the extended hand of his old friend.

"Welcome, Abe," he said. "I am almost tired out with my constant attention to public affairs, and I know of nothing that will rest me more than to talk about old Litchfield and my good friends who live there, or perhaps I ought to say, who used to live there."

"There are a good many on 'em gone," said Abe, "but there's more on 'em comin' every day. It's nip and tuck to see which'll git ahead. Say, Aaron, you haven't been in Litchfield since we fust went to war."

"I am afraid that is so, Abe," was the President's reply. "I have tried many times to go, but something has always intervened to prevent."

"Wall, Aaron," said Abe, "I don't know of your ever promisin' to do anything that you forgot 'cept once, and matters ain't so bad 'cause I've 'tended to it for yer as fer as I could."

"I must confess, Abe, that I do not know what you mean."

"Wall, don't you remember," said Abe, "when we were up in the woods in Maine, when old Abra-

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ham Starkweather died that you promised to do something fer him about a will?"

"Certainly," said the President. "It all comes back to me. He told me that the will was hidden under the anvil. How can I ever forgive myself? I suppose it is too late now. Did the property escheat to the state?"

"Wall, no," said Abe. "Things kinder worked out themselves without any of us helpin'. Yer see, Joe Calkins went to war same time we did and left Mary kind o' single-handed, 'cause she couldn't do much with that baby on her hands. Wall, that white-livered fellow, Sol Priestley, offered to work on the farm if she would give him his board. Then when news came that Starkweather and his son were both dead, Priestley started up the fires in the forge and begun doin' what blacksmith work he could, which wa'n't much. Wall, it turned out he wanted that 'ere anvil moved and he got hold of that 'ere will."

"Did he tell Mary about it?" asked Burr.

"Not much! He just kept still, year arter year, until little Phoebe was about seventeen years old. Then he wanted to marry her, and Mary, bein' kinder grateful fer what Sol had done fer her, took his part, and so Phoebe Calkins is now Mrs. Solomon Priestley. Wall, one day arter they had been married a few months, that foxy Sol found a loose brick somewhere in the back part of the forge and then startled everybody by saying that he had found Starkweather's will, which left every dollar to Phoebe Calkins. So you see, Aaron, that it's

## THE CLIMAX

the righteous that inherit the airth. Course that was some years ago. Phoebe Priestley's got a daughter named Phoebe, and she's goin' to be prettier than her mother was.

"You've been doin' a lot of writin'," Abe continued, as he looked at the manuscript of the message which lay upon the table.

"Yes," said the President, "I have been making some suggestions to Congress about the representatives, vice-president, and members of the cabinet."

"Wall, do you know," said Abe, "we've talked them matters over a good deal down to Litchfield. You see, we git together 'most every night up to Barstow's, and arter we've considered what's been goin' on in the town durin' the day, we git to talkin' politics, and 'twould do some of you fellers in Washington good if you could hear some of the ideas that some on us bring out."

"I have no doubt of it," said the President. Abe's remark had given him an idea and he proceeded to take advantage of the opportunity offered him.

"Well, what do the folks down at Litchfield think about the length of the President's term?"

"Wall now, do you know, Aaron, we've got that all figgered out. We don't think it's quite fair for a senator to git in for six years and a president only for four. Yer see, the people gin Washington two terms and, as all on us are full of human nater, it's only nateral that any man elected president for one term wants to git in agin and be as

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big a man as George was. Now we've decided, down in Litchfield, he orter be elected for eight years, but he mustn't have two terms in succession. Besides, yer see, if he's only elected fer four years, he's goin' to work like all possessed to git in agin and he's goin' to make all the office holders help him for fear they'll git thrown out if they don't."

"Well, I think," said the President, "that you folks down in Litchfield have got the matter about right. Have you ever had any talk about the term of service of members of Congress?"

"It's too short," said Abe. "We think a member of Congress orter have four years at least. As 'tis now, by the time he gits acquainted, it's time fer him to say good-bye. Besides, it brings the 'lections round too often. Yer can't have too many town meetin's, but this agitatin' the country up every two years is too much of a good thing."

"Well," said the President, "so far my message and what the folks in Litchfield think agree to the letter. Now, what is your opinion about the vice-president?"

"Wall," said Abe, "we think the vice-president is very much like the fifth wheel to a coach. One of the fellers, yer know old Lem Staples—but he wasn't old when you knew him—he says the vice-president is very much like havin' an assistant cap'n on a ship; but instid of havin' him up 'side o' the cap'n wher he could see what's goin' on and be ready to take hold if anything happens to the cap'n, they send him down in the cook's galley to make chowder and plum duff."

## THE CLIMAX

"Well," said the President, "supposing I should recommend that the Senate elect its own president from among its members, and that the vice-president be made a member of the Cabinet by virtue of his high office and that he also have a right to a seat in the Senate, but without a vote?"

"That would suit us fellers exactly," said Abe. "One o' the boys thought he oder be Secretary of State; another thought he oder go to London to look out for our business over there, but I guess your idea is the best. He might be wanted in a hurry and 'twould be best to have him near home."

"Now," continued the President, "I am going to make another suggestion to Congress which I hope the boys at Litchfield will think over and give it their hearty support. I am going to suggest that the members of the Cabinet have the right to sit in the House of Representatives and take part in its proceedings, but without a vote. I shall also advise the creation of more departments and a consequent increase in the number of members of the President's advisers."

"I'm sure Litchfield will back yer up on that," said Abe. "If, when you're pickin' out them new Cabinet officers, you can find a place fer a Connecticut man, the hull state will be solid fer yer."

The governmental changes which President Burr recommended in his message and which had been so cordially indorsed by Mr. Budlong of Litchfield, Connecticut, were favorably acted upon. Where the results could be secured by legislation,

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the necessary bills were passed and signed by the President. Where amendments to the Constitution were required, the changes were submitted to the states and duly ratified.

Then Burr turned his attention to the development of the internal resources of the country. Government exploring parties were sent to the West and the gold fields of Colorado, Arizona, and California were soon opened and people flocked to America from all countries of the globe. The growth of the country in population and wealth was unexampled and unparalleled.

Burr then advocated the immediate formation of a navy, for he realized that a country with such a sea front would be exposed to the attacks of foreign nations in case of war. Ships were soon being built along the Atlantic coast and, night and day, sparks flew from the anvils and the ringing of hammers could be heard. A navy sprang up as if by magic, and, in 1812, the United States ranked but little below England in the number and armament power of its naval vessels.

The voice of the people had spoken through their representatives and their will became recorded in the laws and in the Constitution; from these sprang that robust national spirit which was to support the army and navy in the great contests likely to come, and which was to exult, in the future, over the great victories won by these twin arms of the service.



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE LAST OF THE DONS.

PRESIDENT BURR, as soon as suitable legislation had been provided, proceeded at once to reorganize, and, at the same time, expand the Cabinet. A Department of Commerce was formed, and the Secretary given power which would enable him to preserve and extend the maritime interests of the country, both ocean and coast-wise. The next Department created was given charge of the agricultural interests of the country, which Burr foresaw would one day become of paramount importance. Compared with the overpopulated countries of Europe, America resembled a large farm, and "our great farm," Burr said one day to his Cabinet, "will yet feed the world."

To the third new Department was entrusted the conservation and expansion of the manufacturing interests of the republic. Whether the tariff should be for revenue only, for revenue with incidental protection, or whether a great wall of protection, almost prohibitory in its nature, should be erected to shut out the manufactures of other foreign countries, the President considered was one of the most important questions to be solved by the Government. Its consideration was submitted to all the

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members of the Cabinet, and they were authorized to employ the most expert assistance in their investigations.

In a short time the creation of a fourth new Department was found necessary. It was called the Department of Mines and Mining. Congress had passed Homestead Laws, defining the provisions under which new settlers could secure Government lands, but at the suggestion of the President, which was supported by appropriate legislation, it was provided that where mines of gold, silver, copper, or other metals were found upon lands allotted to settlers for agricultural purposes, that when such mines were worked, one-tenth of the value of the product should be turned over to the Treasury of the United States.

The President issued a special message to Congress upon this subject, in which he contended that the selling of land at a nominal price to settlers for agricultural purposes did not in his opinion entitle them to the complete ownership of the almost inexhaustible treasures likely to be found below the surface. He thought that the Government tax of ten per cent was not oppressive, and that if by discovery, or even by knowledge, a settler found a valuable mine upon his land, that the possession of ninety per cent of the product was as much as he had a right to expect. He argued that the country had offered up both lives and money to secure this land; that the Government would be put to continual expense for the maintenance of an army to keep the Indians in subjection; and that the Gov-

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ernment roads constructed at Government expense were a free gift of immense value to the settlers. The common sense of the country recognized the wisdom and fairness of the President's statements and the policy thus established soon showed its beneficial effects. If a million dollars were paid into the Treasury as a mining tax, it was a sure sign that nine millions had been added to the wealth of the country; as it was, the Government share soon amounted to nearly two hundred millions and the increase in the wealth of the country from its mines became easily computable.

The great increase of the Government's wealth, as shown by the statements of the Secretary of the Treasury, induced many statesmen to argue that all other forms of taxation might be remitted, and that the tariff on foreign manufactured articles might be lowered so that they could be sold at reduced prices. These ideas might have been consummated had not other statesmen, interested in keeping the tariff where it was, discovered a method of using the public wealth for the public good. They broached the idea that the time had now come to cut a canal through the Isthmus of Panama, uniting the Gulf of Mexico with the Pacific Ocean, and thus enable the vessels of the United States to easily reach the Western part of its great domain.

The country had the money with which to undertake and carry this great work to completion, but there was one drawback. Where were to

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be found the bone and sinew, the men who could handle the pick and the shovel?

Then President Burr issued a ringing message to Congress, which stamped him as the greatest statesman of the time. He declared that while African slavery had been tolerated, during the period of Colonization, the time had now come for the settlement of that great moral question. He declared that the Panama Canal must be built. He then proceeded to show how it could be constructed in a manner, the most advantageous to the well-being and future prosperity of the country. The number of slaves in the country at that time was about one million two hundred thousand. The President suggested that a commission be appointed to fix the value of these slaves to their masters, bearing in mind the questions of sex, age, sickness, decrepitude, or any form of disability. He advised the payment of one-fifth of the sum so adjudicated in cash; for the remainder, Government bonds were to be issued, bearing a low rate of interest, and payable in instalments during the next ten years. Recognizing that human nature is a fact not easily influenced by argument, he counseled the migration of the blacks from the Southern states to Mexico and Central America. He said that their places would soon be filled by immigration from Europe, and that these emigrants would bring with them a knowledge of agriculture and manufactures. He prophesied that the South would soon become the great manufacturing section, particularly devoted to the manu-

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facture of textiles, for coal, wood, water, and raw cotton and wool were in close proximity.

He further argued that the only laborer who could satisfactorily perform the work of constructing the new canal was the black man, for he was the only one who had the physical strength, and could stand the heat and depressing climate of the Isthmus.

He pointed out that the work could not be done by the Mexicans and Central Americans, for their labor was needed to provide themselves and their families with the means of subsistence. No! The only way in which this great work could be consummated was by the migration of the black race, and for their labor thus transferred would be substituted willing hands which would at once come from abroad and take possession of the industrial vacancy. He further argued that those blacks possessing mechanical knowledge could be employed by the Government for a term of years in the construction of public works, after which time their services in a similar capacity would be needed in Mexico and Central America, their future home.

The message containing these recommendations naturally aroused bitter opposition in some quarters and led to prolonged and animated debates in both houses of Congress. But the President's plan was so majestic, so grand, so comprehensive in its outline, so well cared for in every detail, that the more it was considered, the more feasible and advantageous it seemed to the public mind, and, finally, the necessary legislation to carry

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out the President's recommendations became part of the law of the land.

Great public works were at once planned. More roads were constructed across the plains in order to make communication easier with the Western part of the country. Fortifications were constructed all along the Atlantic coast, while a large force under the control of military and naval officers commenced work upon the Panama Canal.

In 1812, the new provision of the Constitution in relation to the term of office of the President went into practical effect by the election of Aaron Burr for a second term, this second term being for a period of eight years.

All the great plans which had been outlined were in full operation when President Burr, at the express wish of the people, took the reins of government in his hands for a second term. This second term was opposed by some malcontents, the principal one being a gentleman who had once been the most prominent Federalist in the country. His argument that the spirit of the amended Constitution was broken by the fact that President Burr was elected for a second term, when the Constitution expressly prohibited a second term, was met by a statement which could not be refuted, that the amendment of the Constitution relative to the President's term of office did not go into effect until the day following the end of the President's first term of office; to have considered the law as applying to his first term would have been an *ex*

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*post facto* application, which was expressly prohibited by the Constitution.

This concatenation of circumstances enabled President Burr to hold the position of Supreme Executive for a period of twelve years, an opportunity which no other President could ever hope to secure.

England and France were still engaged in a desperate conflict, into which the other nations of Europe had been drawn.

Napoleon was still the despot of Europe, but how different had been his course from that followed by Burr in America!

The Spanish Government, which had lost Mexico and Central America, now began to fear that the opening of the Panama Canal would lead ultimately to the conquest of South America and the complete loss of their power in the Western hemisphere. Their navy was still large and powerful, and their army was in fine condition. They called upon the United States to stop work upon the Panama Canal, declaring that the prosecution of the enterprise was a menace to Spain. To this demand the President replied, through the Secretary of State, that the opening of a canal to be used by the commerce of all nations, could not be reasonably considered as a menace to any country, that plans had been made to complete the canal, and that the honor of the United States demanded that they should be carried out.

The relations between the two countries once more became strained, and, in 1813, war against the

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bellicose Dons was again declared. The result could not but be inevitable. The Spaniards were obliged to transport their men three thousand miles to the scene of battle. The American warships intercepted and captured the Spanish frigates convoying the transports, and the troop ships were taken into American ports and the men on board made prisoners.

By the terms of the treaty of Brussels, San Domingo, Cuba, Porto Rico, and all the lesser Antilles, with the exception of one island, Jamaica, became part of the United States.

Then President Burr sent another special message to Congress, in which he argued that having thrown open the great Western domain of the United States to white settlers, on the most favorable terms, it was only just that the land newly acquired by conquest should be set apart for the benefit of the black man, who, for the good of the country and for his own advancement, had migrated. This plan commended itself to the fair-minded members of both great political parties, and once more President Burr left the impress of a great statesmanlike act upon the history of his country.



## CHAPTER XII.

### A RIDE FOR A BRIDE.

**I**T had not been necessary for the President of the United States to take the field during the second war with Spain. The conflict had been carried on chiefly on the ocean between the navies of the two countries. The few battles fought upon land had been short, sharp, and decisive. The bombardment of Havana had been rendered unnecessary by the capture of many smaller places, and when the army closed in about the capital city and the superb navy of the United States rode at anchor outside the harbor, the futility of a further destruction of life and property became evident even to the belligerent Spaniards. A cessation of hostilities was agreed upon and negotiations to close the war at once begun.

About this time a Department of Public Health was established and the Secretary found an opportunity for the application of improved scientific methods for the sanitation of the Spanish-American cities. The results were so satisfactory that he turned his attention to the overcrowded pestilential quarters of the great cities of the country, and a Constitutional Amendment gave the National Government full power to eradicate such

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sources of drunkenness and crime. This legislation was opposed by some of the more strenuous advocates of States Rights, but they could not effectually meet the argument that a citizen of one state visiting another in which proper sanitary regulations were not enforced, was exposed to personal danger; and that while the National Government had no power to compel a state to pass suitable sanitary laws, it surely had a right to protect the lives of its citizens who for business or for other reasons were obliged to leave their own state. In other words, if a citizen of New York had business interests in the city of New Orleans, as a citizen of the United States he had a right to demand protection from pestilence when visiting the southern city. So, on the other hand, if a citizen of South Carolina had business interests in Boston, and the government of that city or the state of Massachusetts had not taken proper measures to prevent the spread of a contagious disease, there was surely some power in the land which had an inherent right to do so.

Following Abe Budlong's interview with the President, soon after his first assumption of office, he had returned to Litchfield and had given glowing accounts to the old and young inhabitants of Aaron Burr and the great things he was doing for the country. Abe's father and mother were still living, at an advanced age, and he felt that he had no right to leave them when they needed his care.

The day following the receipt of the news that the treaty of Brussels had been signed Abe's father

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sank quietly to rest, and, within a week, the aged couple were reunited. The old homestead where he had been born and where he had passed so many happy years was now untenanted, except by himself, many pleasant memories, and some gloomy forebodings.

He had not married—but why not? There was a long story connected with his failure to become a husband and a father, and he felt as though he must confide in some one and ask for advice. But to whom could he go? Surely not to any one in the town, for they knew enough of his personal affairs, and he did not wish to impart any further confidences. He finally decided that there was only one person to whom he could go, and that was his old friend Aaron—the President.

As on the occasion of Abe's previous arrival, the President was very busy with affairs of state when his visitor was announced; but Burr resolved that the strong ties of friendship which had bound him to Abe when they were young men, should never be renounced by him, despite the difference in their positions.

"Well, Abe," was his salutation, "how are matters in old Litchfield? Do you know I have thought several times since you were last here of my failure to carry out old Abraham Starkweather's injunction in regard to his will, but I have solaced myself with the fact that you did not forget my promise and did what you could to carry it out."

"Wall," replied Abe, somewhat moodily, "all my

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troubles seem to have come upon me on account of that old will. I didn't tell yer when I was last here, but they say confession is good fer the soul, and I'm goin' to own up that Solomon Priestley got the gal that I wanted to marry myself."

"Oh, yes," said Burr. "I remember she was a little girl of five or six when we left town that morning to march to Cambridge."

"Yes," said Abe, "but she growed up. Jest about the time I thought of proposin' I heerd that she wus goin' to marry Sol Priestley."

"But there are many other pretty girls in Litchfield," said Burr.

"I know what yer mean," Abe replied, "but I wanted that gal. Now I'm in a quandary and I've come on here to have yer help me out. Father and mother are dead, and I've got a house on my hands and no one to look a'ter it. I must have a wife, or sell out and quit."

"Don't do that, Abe," said Burr. "You are too old to leave the old home. You must stick to it. Now, how can I help you to do that? Do you need money?"

"Oh, no," said Abe. "I didn't come on here to beg. The old folks had somethin' saved up in the chimbley and I've put by a snug sum myself. I've not earned much, but I ain't spent nothin' and what I've got I've kept."

Abe sat for several minutes evidently considering how he should ease his mind of something that was bearing down upon it. Burr knew that the best way to find it out was to express no further

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curiosity, but to wait that evolution of thought which would bring the expected development. It soon came.

"Well, no doubt, Aaron, yer'll think it mighty strange, but I've fallen in love with another gal, and I want her jest as bad as I did t'other one. You'll be surprised when I tell yer that the gal I've sot my eyes on, and hanker a'ter more'n a sheep does for salt, is Phebie Priestley, the darter of the first gal that I wanted to make Mrs. Bud-long."

"Won't she have you?" interrogated Burr.

"Oh, the gal's all right," said Abe, "and her mother's on my side, but yer see, there h'ain't been any love lost between Sol Priestley and me since that day that he refused to march with us ter Cambridge, and old Starkweather gave him sich a talking to. Phoebe ain't got any other feller as far's I know, but Sol's argyment is that I'm too old fer her, and p'r'aps lookin' at it from his pint o' view, he may be right. Now if yer can tell me how on airth I can overcome his objections, yer'll be doin' me the greatest sarvice yer ever did in yer life."

"Let me think it over," said Burr. "Absence, they say, sometimes touches the heartstrings, and if I were you I would stay away from Litchfield for a month or two. You can see the sights about this great city, which is going to be the most beautiful one in the country, and, if you wish, you can easily get a chance to go West on one of the Government exploring parties."

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"Wall, I guess I'll see Washington fust, and then call 'round and talk it over with yer agin."

Not more than a fortnight had elapsed before Abe made a fruitless effort to see the President; it was Cabinet Day and many important questions were under consideration. The next day the President devoted to the consideration of important bills which had reached him for signature, and admittance was refused to everyone. It was not until the fifth day that Abe was able to secure the desired audience. There was a wild look in his eye, and his face showed signs of physical or mental pain.

"I am afraid you have not been enjoying yourself, Abe," the President remarked.

"Well, I don't see how I could, Aaron, considerin' the tenter hooks I've been on for the past week. I told old Lem Staples to keep an eye on Sol and Phoebe while I was away, and I've got a letter from Lem, in which he tells me that Sol Priestley is detarmined that his darter Phoebe shall marry Jake Carruthers. Jake's a widower considerably older than I am, but he owns the best farm in Litchfield and has quite a pile of money in the bank."

"It seems to me," said Burr, "that the question of age is not an insurmountable one in the mind of Mr. Priestley. That being the case, it becomes a simple question of money. Now, Abe, are you going to let Mr. Priestley sell his daughter to Mr. Carruthers?"

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"No, by gosh, I ain't! But how in thunder can I stop it?"

"Well," said Burr, "perhaps you will look at the matter in a different way from what I do, but if I were in your place I should start back to Litchfield without losing a moment, ask the girl to marry me, and if her father objected, I should marry her just the same."

Abe looked at the President for a moment in what seemed to be speechless astonishment. Then he ejaculated:

"Well, Aaron, it's no wonder you're President. A man that can settle a momentuous question like that in so few words as you've done is entitled to all he can get. I'll pack my carpet-bag, get a seat on the first stage coach goin' north and as sure as my name's Abe Budlong, there'll be a Mrs. Budlong afore a fortnight's got over my head."

Abe lost no time in making preparations for his homeward journey. He went at once to his lodgings, packed his carpet-bag and made sure that the greater part of his money, which was in a belt fastened about his waist, was safe. When he went to the tavern to book his passage on the stage coach he found that all the inside seats were taken, but that he could have a place beside the driver. This suited him exactly, for he said to himself that if he could see the horses moving, it would seem to him that he was going faster than it would if he sat inside.

When long stretches of level ground were reached, Abe dropped tips into the driver's hand,

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with the view of securing an increase in the speed of the horses, yet many a time his hands itched to grasp the reins and the whip, for it must be remembered that although his body was in Maryland, his heart was in Connecticut.

The travelers met with no particular incident or accident on the way, and, in due course of time, Baltimore was reached. As soon as the coach drew up at the tavern, Abe's first inquiry was as to how soon he could leave for Philadelphia. He chafed inwardly and condemned the whole system of passenger transportation when he found that he would be obliged to wait six hours. During those six hours Phoebe Priestley was married at least six times to old Jacob Carruthers, despite Abe's energetic mental efforts to prevent the ceremony; but when, once more perched upon the seat beside the driver, he heard the crack of the whip and the clattering of the horses' hoofs, hope again revived, and the unhappy memories of the past six hours were banished from his mind.

In Philadelphia, as in Baltimore, Abe's first act upon entering the city was to ascertain how soon he could leave it. This time he was more fortunate, for a mail coach, bound for Jersey City, was scheduled to leave in an hour. The seat beside the driver was taken, but, as there were indications of a storm, Abe had no difficulty in effecting an exchange. The driver was one of the talkative kind, and, after closely examining Abe's honest face, decided to make a confidant of him.

"I don't mind tellin' yer, sir," said he, "'cause



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if anything happens, I'd like to have a witness that I did all I could." Here he stopped.

"What's the matter?" asked Abe. "Have yer got somebody in the coach that ain't jest what they ought ter be, and yer keeping it kind o' secret?"

"No, that ain't it," said the driver, and his voice sank to a low confidential whisper, "but the fact is, one o' my passengers has got a valise with him that's got more'n twenty thousand dollars' worth of yellow boys in it. I've tucked it in under the seat, and there ain't nobody but you, and him, and me that knows anything about it; but I thought I'd better tell some one, 'cause doubtful things are mighty onsartin.'

One of the forward horses stumbled and fell on his knees as they were descending a short hill at the entrance to quite a long stretch of woods.

"Have yer any objections, stranger," said the driver, as the horse regained its feet, "to goin' for-'ard and seein' if that ere horse is got a loose shoe? P'raps you had better wait, though, till we get in under the trees, for I guess the storm is not far off."

His words were hardly spoken before the storm broke upon them.

"We'll be as wet as drowned rats afore we get to a place of shelter," he added, as he turned up his coat collar and pulled his hat down over his eyes. "We'll light the lanterns as soon as we get in under the trees."

The natural roof provided by the overhanging

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and interlaced branches of the trees did form quite a protection. The driver busied himself with lighting the lanterns on the outside and inside of the coach, while Abe went forward to make an investigation as to the condition of the horse and his shoe.

While thus engaged, his body nearly doubled in order to allow a closer inspection of the shoe, he heard a chorus of shouts and looking up, saw that the stage coach was surrounded by a large body of men, holding torches, by the light of which Abe discerned that the men were masked.

In such exigencies, the intelligent brain moves with lightning-like rapidity. "Robbers!" thought Abe. "If they get me, they'll take my money. If I lose my money, I'll never get to Litchfield. If I don't get to Litchfield, Phoebe Priestley is lost to me." As soon as he arrived at this conclusion, which in actual point of time had not taken more than fifteen seconds, he fell upon his hands and knees, and, keeping in front of the horses, so as to be screened from sight, crept forward until a turn in the road shut the horses and coach from view. Then, rising to his feet, he ran at full speed, he knew not whither.

The storm kept on and seemed to have redoubled its fury. Abe was wet to the skin, but his heart was still warm within. He could tell by the deep ruts that he was in the main road, and he knew that that road was the nearest one to Litchfield. Judging from his own feelings, he had been walking for hours, when he heard the noise of

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horses' feet behind him. He saw the outlines of a building, some little distance ahead, and ran toward it as fast as he could. He discovered that it was a barn, evidently too old and dilapidated for further use, for the doors had fallen from their hinges. It was probably uninhabited, except by rats. Abe's first thought was that he would hide just inside the open door and wait until the horse-men had passed by, but his native caution asserted itself. "They may drop in here to git out of the storm," was his thought, and, not knowing whether the newcomers were friends or foes, he looked about for a more secure and secluded hiding place. He found a flight of steps leading to a loft where hay had once been stored. Throwing himself upon the dusty, worm-eaten floor, he rested his head upon his hand and listened.

Abe's precaution had been well taken. The sound of hoofs grew nearer and nearer, and then suddenly stopped. Whoever they were, the midnight riders had surely come to a halt. Then Abe heard voices, followed by the sound of heavy boots walking upon the barn floor beneath him. One of the men must have possessed flint and tinder, for a torch was soon lighted and fastened in a crevice between the floor boards of the barn, casting a gloomy, fitful light over the place and the four men who had entered it.

They were masked and were undoubtedly four of the stage-coach robbers. The masks were soon removed and Abe looked into the faces of four apparently honest farmers, or farmer's sons. They

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surely were not robbers by profession. Abe surmised that they had heard of the booty which was to be carried upon the stage coach, and had made up their minds that there was a quicker way of making a fortune than by working for it.

"Well, Jim," said one of the party, "shall we go on, or wait here for a while and see if the storm will hold up? We must get back by morning, or the story we told our wives won't hold water."

"Whose got the money?" asked the one addressed as Jim.

"Why, Bob Swazey, of course. Didn't we decide, afore we started out, that Bob was the best one to take charge of it? He keeps a store; when he goes to Philadelphia or New York, no one will think odd of it if he puts out the money pretty freely, whereas the rest of us, if we showed any gold, would be open to suspicion. No, Bob's all right and his three sons, who are with him, will keep their mouths shut for their father's sake."

"What shall we do with the horses, Jack?" asked another of the party, addressing the one who had first spoken.

"Well, I've been thinking since I stood here that it would be a good plan to bring 'em in here and leave 'em. We can't sell 'em, and the only reason I took 'em was so we could get out of the way quicker and keep the stage coach passengers from following us or putting anyone on our track."

"Well, I think," said the fourth one, who, up to this time, had not spoken, "that the sooner we do it and start for home, the better. We can go

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'cross lots till we get to the other turnpike road, and can get home that way."

The torch was extinguished, and the men led the horses into the barn.

"It's too dark," said one man, "to tie 'em up, but I don't think they'll be likely to go out in the rain, till we've got out of the way. Horses don't know much, in my opinion, but I think they do know enough to stop in when it rains."

The party laughed at this and soon left the barn. Abe listened until the sound of their retreating footsteps died away in the distance. Then he slowly descended the steps. His movements were heard by the horses, who showed signs of uneasiness. They began to move about, jostling each other and stamping their feet upon the barn floor. Abe was used to the sound of horses' feet on a barn floor, but on this occasion, the sounds resembled a volley of musketry or the roar of a cannon. Abe's hand finally came in contact with the bridle of one of the horses and he led him at once outside the barn. He had ridden bare backed so many times when he was a boy, that the art had not forsaken him.

It was some little time before he could decide whether he should turn to the right or the left, for when he had entered the barn, he had not taken particular notice as to which side of the road it was on. When he reached the road, however, his memory was quickened, for he recalled the fact that he had turned to the right; so he turned his horse's head in the same direction and started for-

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ward at a brisk pace. Soon he heard the sound of running water; he must be approaching a brook or a small river. Should he find a bridge, or had it been carried away by the swollen torrent?

What was that sound behind him? Horse's feet, surely! Had the robbers returned and, finding one of the horses gone, started in pursuit of him? No, that idea was nonsensical, but, nevertheless, it was a fact that a number of horses were speedily approaching him from behind. He urged his own horse on and soon saw the outlines of a small, wooden bridge, stretched across a narrow river. It required some urging from Abe to induce the horse to step upon the bridge, but he finally did so and the passage was safely made. As soon as he reached the other side, Abe drew up, for the sound of horse's feet behind him showed that the animals must have reached the other end of the bridge. Abe was unarmed. If the robbers were following him, then all was lost—both his money and Phoebe Priestley.

By the dim light, he saw the horses as they rushed upon the bridge. It was all explained—the horses had no riders. Discovering the absence of their mate, they had followed him. Abe's heart leaped for joy, but the next moment it was filled with sympathy; for Abe was too kind-hearted to see unmoved any harm come to an animal, any sooner than to a man, in fact, he had declared a good many times at the store, "that some animals were a good deal better than some men."

What took place, no human agency could have

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prevented. The combined weight of the three horses and their momentum as they dashed upon the bridge, was too much for the frail structure. It broke from its fastenings, swayed, and fell into the river, carrying the horses with it, and all were carried down stream by the swift-running, and powerful current.

At the next town, Abe secured refreshment and rest. He also purchased a saddle, inventing a plausible story to explain the fact of his having none. Abe argued that when one must do a thing, he must not be too particular about the way of doing it. So, when he reached Jersey City, he sold the horse and saddle; here he engaged passage on a schooner bound for New Haven, but again the Fates were unpropitious. The whole of his progress, since leaving Philadelphia, had been marked by storm after storm, but the one which overtook the little schooner upon which he was a passenger was more severe than any that had preceded. The schooner was driven ashore on the northern coast of Long Island, and Abe found himself, the next morning, the sole survivor of the ill-fated crew. Where he was, he did not know. Of the fact that he was hatless, shoeless, without anything to eat or drink, he was soon painfully conscious. He had been so weakened by exposure to the storm that he was unable to walk any great distance in the drenching rain, but he felt he must do something or he should die where he was. There was a lull in the storm and, some of the black clouds having moved westward, he was able to discern what ap-

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peared to be a fisherman's hut about a mile distant. He succeeded in reaching it and was given a warm welcome by the occupant, an old weather-beaten tar. Some fried fish, a draught of good rum, some warm blankets, and ten hours' rest, put Abe in good condition. Again, the weather had cleared, and the fisherman, for a sum of money shown him by Abe, which represented more than the possible profits from a week's hard labor, offered to take his guest across the Sound to New Haven.

Here Abe purchased another horse and secured a suitable personal outfit for the remainder of his trip. He progressed northward safely, for the horse which he had purchased was a steady one, although, on several occasions, he had shown that he possessed a will of his own. This was forcibly and unpleasantly demonstrated when they reached a small river which it was necessary to ford. Here, Abe found that entreaties, oaths, blows, and every other means to which he resorted were powerless to induce the animal to enter the water. Abe had handled balky horses, but this seemed to be a new variety of the species. Horses usually balk on land, but, for some inexplicable reason, this one did not balk until he came to the water. This was the most unpleasant predicament into which Abe had been thrown. He knew that he was not more than thirty miles from Litchfield, and if he were on the other side with the horse, the distance could be covered before nightfall. How silly it all seemed! A powerful man endowed with reason,



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completely at the mercy of an unreasoning brute.

Something must be done, and Abe soon resolved upon the best—in fact, the only course to pursue. Plunging into the river, he forded it without difficulty and scrambled up on the bank on the other side. Then he endeavored by persuasive words to induce the horse to follow him, but the ungenerous and ungrateful beast whirled about, tossed its heels high in the air and started off at a gallop in the opposite direction. Abe sent a blessing after him and resumed his journey on foot.

Since leaving Washington, there had been one vision ever present to Abe Budlong's mind; that picture was Phoebe Priestley in her wedding gown, standing before the minister, while he, in his best go-to-meeting suit, stood beside her. Was that vision ever to become a reality? It seemed to Abe that he had suffered as much for the sake of his lady-love as usually fell to the lot of mortal man, but he was destined to suffer more.

About noontime, he reached another small river similar to the one which he had crossed, but which his horse had not. Thinking he could ford it as easily as he had the other, he plunged in, but, to his astonishment, he discovered no firm footing. Instead, being unprepared, he sank. When he regained the surface he realized that he must swim for it. The river was narrow and deep and the current strong, and, although Abe plied his strokes lustily, he was carried far down stream before he was able to make a landing. He looked in vain for

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a road; there was none to be found. He was on the edge of a thick wood through which he was obliged to force his way; his face and hands and clothing being torn by the underbrush and projecting branches.

Coming to an open space covered with long grass, he increased his speed, but soon found, to his dismay, after taking a few steps, that he had fallen into a bog. Quickly realizing his possible danger, he reached upward and grasped the projecting branch of a tree. It took all his strength to raise his body above the level of the bog and throw himself upon the firm ground. There he fell exhausted. He lay, he knew not how long, but night had closed in upon him when he awoke. Abe recalled the old days when, with Aaron Burr and the rest of the boys, he had traversed the wilds of Maine under Benedict Arnold to capture Quebec. "If Aaron was with me," he soliloquized, "I wouldn't think so much of this. But, by gosh! this fightin' the force of nater alone, ain't what it's cracked up to be, and"—changing the subject quickly—"d—n that horse!"

Refreshed by his enforced night's rest, but hungry and thirsty, Abe, next morning, started upon the last day of his pilgrimage. It was bright and sunshiny and he soon found a path, through the woods, which led to the main road. Stopping at a farmhouse, he got some bread and milk, for which the kind-hearted farmer refused any pay. Abe learned that he was still about twenty miles from Litchfield, but when the farmer asked him

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where he was bound, Abe answered that he was on his way to Springfield, for he did not care to disclose his identity.

The west was still brightly lighted by the rays of the sun when Abe reached the town which lay just south of Litchfield. From the fact that during the whole day he had seen on one at work in the fields, and had heard in the distance the ringing of the church bells, he had concluded that it was Sunday.

It was dark when he reached the borders of Litchfield. He went at once to his own house; that was shut up and he could learn nothing there. The store, also would be closed and no information could be derived from that source. Then it occurred to him that the church would be the place to meet people and learn the latest intelligence; but he could not enter the church in his present condition,—covered with mud as he was, while his clothing bore unmistakable evidences of the hardships encountered during his journey.

No, he would not go into the church, but would loiter outside until some one came along with whom he was acquainted, and then he would find out how the land lay. It must have been later than he had supposed, for when he approached the church, he found that it was open and the congregation had assembled. There was an old man standing in the road just before the wide pathway which led to the church door. As Abe reached him, he saw that it was Ben Dickson, one of the village loafers whose throat had often been wetted at Abe's expense.

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"I say, Ben," and Abe pressed a shilling into the old man's hand, "what's goin' on up ter the church ternight?"

Ben chuckled as he closed his fingers on the shilling, and then gave an ominous sort of laugh. "Well, if that be you, Abe Budlong, instid of a scarecrow, as I tuck yer fer at fust, yer the fust man that ought ter know what's goin' on. Ye've got home jest in time to see Phoebe Priestley git married—"

Abe did not wait for old Ben to finish his remarks. With an oath in his heart, if not upon his lips, he dashed up the pathway, into the church, and up the center aisle, not stopping in his headlong pace until he stood face to face with Jacob Carruthers.

"I forbid the banns!" cried Abe, in a hoarse voice. As he uttered the words, all mud be-spattered as he was, he threw his left arm about Phoebe Priestley, who turned to him with a glad cry. The clergyman who stood distracted for several minutes by the interruption, finally regained his composure and enough command over his voice to ejaculate, "On what grounds—"

"Plenty on 'em!" cried Abe. "Fust and foremost, this gal, afore I went away, gave me her promise that she'd marry me when I came back. Secondly and lastly, she don't want ter marry Jake Carruthers, but her father wants her ter and he's forced her to it. Ain't that so, Phoebe?"

He turned towards the girl as he spoke, who did

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not answer, but rested her head confidently on his shoulder.

"Silence gives consent," said Abe.

"We'll see about this!" cried Solomon Priestley, as he left his pew and walked towards Abe. "My darter ain't of age; under the sarcumstances, I s'pose this marriage can't go on tonight, but there's another night comin'. I don't give my consent to her marrying Abe Budlong, and I command her to come home with me at once."

Phoebe Priestley's face had a look of defiance in it.

"You don't speak the truth, Father," she cried. "Mother told me today that I needn't marry Jacob Carruthers unless I wanted to, and she told me I was eighteen years of age a week ago."

"She might have told yer that," snarled Solomon Priestley, "ter ease yer mind, but she can't prove it, and she won't stand up here and say it afore this congregation."

As he said this, he looked at his wife with an expression on his face that seemed to say, "You had better not do it, even if yer want to!"

During this conversation, Abe's temper had been rising, and it now reached the point of explosion.

"This marriage is goin' on!" he cried. "But there's one person here whose presence is objectionable. Mr. Carruthers, you'll oblige me by departin' from this sacred edifice."

"I'll go when I git ready!" retorted Jacob.

"And I say," yelled Abe, "that ye'll go now!"

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Releasing his hold upon Phoebe, Abe made a rush forward and, grabbing Jacob about the waist, lifted him bodily from the floor. Then amid the applause of the congregation, who evidently sided with him, Abe carried his kicking, struggling, burden down the center aisle, through the doorway, and finally deposited him in the pathway leading to the road. Then he walked proudly back into the church and resumed his position by the side of Phoebe Priestley.

"Go ahead, parson," said Abe.

"But you have no license," said the clergyman. "I cannot proceed without a license. If I do, I should lay myself open to the law."

"Whatever it costs yer, I'll pay," said Abe. "Besides, I've got a license."

"Where is it?" asked the clergyman.

"Well," said Abe, "before I left Washington, Aaron Burr, President of the United States, says to me: 'Abe Budlong, you jest go back ter Litchfield as fast as yer legs will carry yer, and as soon as yer git there, if Phoebe Priestley will marry yer, you jest git married, and I'll give you my blessin'.' Now, Mr. Parson, if yer want any more of a license than that, all I can say is yer no patriot."

In using the name of Aaron Burr, Abe unconsciously had touched a tender cord in the heart of the clergyman. The Rev. Mr. Manners, who had very lately been called to Litchfield from a church in Fairfield, was well acquainted with the Burr family and was a great admirer of the President.

"Well," said Mr. Manners, "I had proceeded so

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far in the ceremony, as to say, 'Jacob will you take this woman, Phoebe'—"

"Well, Mr. Parson, jest leave out Jacob and put in Abiel, and go ahead jest as though nothin' had happened."

After declaring that his daughter should never become the wife of Abe Budlong, and demanding that she return home, Solomon Priestley had returned to his pew and resumed his seat beside his wife. With a white face and her features sternly set, the wife had whispered something in the husband's ear which produced such an effect upon him that he offered no further remonstrance as the clergyman proceeded with the marriage ceremony, and, at its close, declared Abiel and Phoebe to be man and wife.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THANKFUL MACY.

MRS. DELIA COFFIN, an estimable Quaker lady, owned a comfortable house in a respectable residence quarter of the city of New York. She was a widow, and the house had been a part of the fortune left her by her husband. Besides it, he had left her some money from which she derived a small income. She added to it by letting rooms to lodgers, and she was feeling quite gratified because, that morning, a nice-appearing gentleman between fifty and sixty years of age had engaged one of her rooms, at her own price, for a niece who was expected shortly to arrive in the city.

He had given the name of Thomas Macy and had said that the name of his brother's daughter was Thankful Macy. Mrs. Coffin had not had an opportunity to make any inquiries of the gentleman, but she determined that when the niece arrived, she would find out whether there was any bond of relationship between herself and her expected lodger. Her own maiden name was Delia Macy, she had been born in Nantucket, and no Scotchman can recognize another Scotchman any



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quicker than one Nantucketer can another wanderer from that island.

The letter which Thankful Macy had received from her uncle Thomas advised her to seek an early opportunity to visit New York, giving to Mrs. Alston as her reason that she wished to see her only surviving relative, her Uncle Thomas, and relate to him the sad particulars of his brother's death.

Mrs. Alston possessed a sympathetic heart and for that reason alone pitied the young girl, the story of whose misfortunes had been confided to her in a letter from her father. Besides this bond of sympathy, there was another reason why Mrs. Alston had become attached to the girl. Her little son Aaron showed a great liking for Miss Macy, and the young lady, who was evidently very fond of children and well acquainted with their ways, showed a warm affection for the boy. When Miss Macy expressed her wish to visit New York for a few weeks, no valid objection could be urged. Mrs. Alston's father had stated that he wished the young girl provided for until some other means of support could be found, and Mrs. Alston considered any wish of this kind expressed by her father in the light of a command. Little Aaron shed many tears when Miss Macy left them and made her promise a dozen times that she would not be gone more than a month.

On the day appointed for the arrival of his niece, Mr. Thomas Macy accompanied her to Mrs. Coffin's house. Being shown to her room she pro-

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nounced it very comfortable and home-like. Then uncle and niece had a long talk together.

Strange as it may seem, this conversation did not relate to the sad death of his brother Ephraim, but was conducted by Mr. Thomas Macy on entirely different lines.

"It is needless to remark," he began, "that I am disappointed with what you have accomplished. I cannot say I am disappointed with any particular thing, as you really have done nothing."

"I have followed your instructions implicitly," said the young woman, with some asperity in her tone. "I am not to blame if your plans which I have faithfully carried out, have not resulted as you wished. Of course," she continued, "I had little chance to find anything to his discredit while he was at home with his daughter; he would naturally appear at his best there, and if he had any secrets to confide to her, it would be impossible for me to learn them from one so close-mouthed as Mrs. Alston. She is no ordinary woman. She is more intelligent and better educated than any woman or any man, even, that I have met, with the exception of her father."

"If you have such a high opinion of the abilities and talents of the lady and gentleman with whom you have been living, perhaps you would prefer to transfer your allegiance and serve them instead of me," said Mr. Macy, and his voice was full of withering sarcasm.

"It might be to my advantage," the young woman replied, promptly, "if I told those persons

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what I know about you. On second thought would you advise me, as you suggest, to transfer my allegiance?"

Mr. Thomas Macy saw that he had gone too far.

"Certainly not. I realize the disadvantages under which you have labored. I still have confidence in your ability to serve my interests, and I know that you will do it faithfully and well. As you say, truthfully, the plans were mine. If they have produced no fruitful results it is my fault and not yours. The duty devolves upon me for devising other plans, and when they are formulated, I will entrust them to you for execution."

"I have waited," said the young woman, "to ask you a question, but I will wait no longer. What was the matter with my little girl? Did you do all that you could to save her?"

"No loving father could have done more," was the response. "Mrs. Walters sent me word that the child was sick, and I went to the house at once. I secured a doctor and a nurse, but all our efforts were unavailing."

"Did she ask after me?" was the young woman's next inquiry.

The man hesitated. Then he thought, perhaps, that the subject was too sacred a one to be polluted with a lie, so he replied:

"During the last day of her sickness, she cried continually for her mother to come to her."

"My God!" cried the woman, and she buried her face in her hands in tearless grief. After a while, she lifted her head and said:

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"When you have gone, perhaps the tears will come to my relief, but I cannot cry now. Leave me alone for a few days. Then come to me with your plans. I shall have no other object left in the world now, except to do as you say."

"You have made no inquiry about your husband."

"You certainly should know the reason why. Where is he?" she asked.

"I don't know," was the reply, and Mr. Macy did not seem disposed to make any further reference as to his whereabouts.

"You will be comfortable here," he said, as he arose to leave. "As you request it, I will not call upon you again for several days."

It was not until the second day after the arrival of her lodger that Mrs. Coffin found an opportunity to prosecute her inquiries. She had visited Miss Macy's room to see if she could do anything to add to her comfort, but had received several answers in the negative. She was not, however, to be completely rebuffed, so she blurted out the leading inquiry:

"Did you say your uncle, Mr. Macy, was born in Nantucket?"

"I don't remember speaking of the matter to you," said Miss Macy, "but I presume he was."

"Thomas, Thomas Macy," Mrs. Coffin repeated to herself. "I don't recall the name. You may wonder at my curiosity, but the fact is my maiden name was Delia Macy; I was born in Nantucket myself, and was married to Samuel Coffin, who

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was also born there. I came of a Quaker family, but my husband did not, and, after we were married, I was read out of church and my husband decided that we would leave the island, and we came here to New York, but all of us Nantucketers are interested in the others, especially if they bear the same name. When I heard your name was Macy, I began to wonder whether we belonged to the same family or not. I believe your uncle said that his brother's name was Ephraim. Now I've ransacked my memory from top to bottom, but I never heard of an Ephraim Macy. What was your mother's name?"

Miss Macy instantly recognized the fact that to know a little would be even worse than to know nothing, so she replied:

"I know nothing about the island except what has been told me by my father and my uncle. My mother was a Spanish woman; my father met her, so he told me, at Vera Cruz. She died soon after I was born, and I have no remembrance of her. I have lived in Mexico with my mother's relatives until recently."

"I thought your uncle said," remarked Mrs. Coffin, "that your father's vessel was captured by pirates, and that you were taken to Mexico."

"Well," said Miss Macy, "there is nothing strange in that, as I can see; I used to accompany my father on his vessel. We were captured, as my uncle told you, and my father was killed and I was taken to Mexico. It so happened that I could not have been taken to a better place."

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Considerably disconcerted at her failure to extract any information which would prove or disprove any relationship between Delia and Thankful Macy, Mrs. Coffin retired from her lodger's apartment, but she did not propose to give up the battle so easily. So she sat down and wrote several letters to old friends in Nantucket, asking them to search the church records carefully and let her know at the earliest possible moment, if they found any record of a Captain Ephraim Macy and his brother Thomas Macy.

On the morning of the fourth day, Mr. Thomas Macy called again to see his niece, and they had a long conversation together. When it was over, Mr. Macy sought an interview with Mrs. Coffin and informed her that his niece had decided to return to Mexico and would leave on the day but one following. Mrs. Coffin had hoped that her lodger's stay would be prolonged until she had had time to receive answers to her letters, but early on the morning of the second day Mr. Thomas Macy appeared and, in a very short time, he and Miss Thankful Macy were lost to Mrs. Coffin's sight; but they were not lost to her memory, especially when the replies came to her letters, all of which coincided in the statement that no record could be found in Nantucket of any Macy by the name of either Ephraim or Thomas who could possibly be the persons she had described.

But Thankful Macy did not return to Mexico. Neither did she return to Washington to keep the promise made to little Aaron Burr Alston. At

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her uncle's suggestion, she wrote a letter to Mrs. Alston informing her that her uncle was well-to-do and would provide for her in the future. She returned her sincere thanks and expressed profound gratitude both to General Burr and his daughter for their kindness to her, and hoped that some day she might be able to make some suitable return. Until then, however, she must ever remain as she was now, their grateful debtor.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### AN OLD ENEMY.

**B**Y prodigious efforts, work upon the canal was pressed forward so rapidly that, early in 1814, it was opened to the commerce of all nations. Then, President Burr perceived that the presence of the island of Jamaica, under the British flag, gave British war vessels a pretence for remaining in close proximity to the entrance of the canal, and this, he saw, might become a menace to the United States.

The construction of the new American navy had been pushed forward with great rapidity, and, on the occasion of the opening of the canal, twenty-five frigates and ships of the line were present and took part in the dedication ceremonies.

After considerable disputation in Congress, the naming of the ships had been delegated to the Secretary of the Navy, with the understanding that the names selected by him should be approved by the President. The Secretary of the Navy decided that the vessels should bear the names of the heroes of the Revolution, and they were accordingly christened *George Washington*, *Thomas Jefferson*, *John Adams*, *Alexander Hamilton*, *Philip*



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*Schuyler, Richard Montgomery, Israel Putnam, Horatio Gates*, and so on to the end of the list.

It was with some trepidation in his manner that the Secretary suggested that one of the frigates should be called the *Thomas Jefferson*. To his surprise, however, the President promptly signified his approval.

"I had thought," said the Secretary, "that perhaps you might object."

"Not at all!" said the President, breaking in. "I think it a very appropriate name for a warship. If, during an engagement, one side of the vessel should be so badly injured as to be useless, the *Thomas Jefferson* will find it easy to make a quick change of front and present the other side to the enemy."

The honorable Secretary was evidently much more perturbed in spirit when he suggested the name, *Alexander Hamilton*, than he had been when he mentioned that of *Thomas Jefferson*. The President, however, signified his acquiescence in the selection.

"Now you probably thought," said he, "that, although I might consent to name a frigate after a Republican, I might object, and consistently, to calling one after a Federalist. Alexander Hamilton has been a brave soldier, a fine lawyer, and a most unsuccessful politician. He has many fine qualities of mind, but they are subordinated to his two greatest attributes, conceit and envy. The first has made it impossible for him to tolerate

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equals or be polite to inferiors, while his envy has re-enforced his conceit."

To one name suggested for a ship of the line, the President evinced strong objections.

"I do not think it would be safe," he said, "to name one of our vessels the *James Wilkinson*. To be true to its name, it would often have to sail under false colors and, during an engagement, would be as likely to fire at a friend as at a foe."

The increase in the naval establishment caused a desire in the minds of some of the officers that a more exalted rank than that of Commodore should be created. It was pointed out that in all the European navies the highest officers were designated as Admirals, and a bill was introduced into Congress and passed providing for the appointment of Admirals in the navy. This bill, however, was vetoed by President Burr. In the message which accompanied the veto, he said:

"I do not believe that there is any exigency which requires us to give up the old and honored name of commodore. It is what a man does that gives him renown and not the particular title which he bears. A commodore may be as brave as an admiral. If, in the minds of the officers of the navy, the word commodore in itself does not seem to be so exalted a title as that of admiral, then every time that an American commodore is victorious over a foreign admiral, the credit will be so much the greater, and, in time, the title, commodore, will be a more honorable distinction than that of admiral."

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The President, however, suggested that it might be possible to grade the commodores, and, in accordance with his suggestion, a bill was introduced and passed which classed the commodores in three grades. Those of the lower grade were designated as "Commodores of the Red," and were entitled to fly a red pennant; those of the middle grade were called "Commodores of the Blue," and flew a blue pennant; those in the upper grade were designated as "Full Commodores," and flung to the breeze a pennant half blue and half red.

A proposition was made to the representative of Great Britain that the United States would purchase the island of Jamaica, but the offer was peremptorily refused. Then the President, in a special message to Congress, gave voice to the famous doctrine that the presence of any foreign power in North America was contrary to the best interests of the United States.

There could be but one way of understanding this message, and it was answered in the most defiant manner. A large fleet of British war vessels was sent at once to Jamaica, and the United States was informed that no vessels would be allowed to pass through the Panama Canal until a treaty had been made by which England was given equal rights with the United States in the policing of the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean at either end of the canal. This proposition was at once spurned by the President and rejected by Congress, and the strained relations soon ended in a declaration of war against an old enemy.

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A desperate naval fight took place between the American Armada, under command of Commodore Stephen Decatur, and the British war fleet whose operations were directed by Admiral Lord Mathews. In this conflict, President Burr's prophecy was verified, for the American Commodore proved himself the superior in naval strategy of the British Admiral. The morning after the battle, the vessels of the British fleet which had escaped destruction or capture had disappeared — they had gone, no one knew whither.

Fifty transports laden with the officers and men belonging to the American army had been convoyed by the American fleet. Kingston could make no effectual resistance against such an army, and the stars and stripes soon waved over the island of Jamaica with its handful of white residents and its great preponderance of discontented blacks.

Following out the plan which had been pursued in the case of the other Antilles, the President issued a proclamation announcing the conquest of the island of Jamaica and declaring that the land of the island would be disposed of to the blacks on the same favorable terms as had been fixed upon in the case of Cuba and the other West India Islands.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE VICTORIOUS "ALEXANDER HAMILTON."

MANY were the surmises among the officers of the American fleet, as to the destination of the British warships after their departure from the vicinity of the island of Jamaica. Commodore Decatur, after due reflection, came to the conclusion that the British vessels had gone north to attack American seaports and harass the coast. Leaving a couple of the smaller frigates in the harbor of Kingston, he sailed in pursuit of the enemy with the remainder of his fleet.

His flagship, the *George Washington*, had been so badly injured during the naval battle which preceded the capture of Jamaica, that he transferred his blue and red pennant to the *Alexander Hamilton*, a much smaller vessel, but which had two advantages over its larger companions. It was the fastest vessel in the fleet, and carried eight 24-pounders, being much heavier guns than those on any of the other frigates. They were the first of the size in use in the American Navy, and their probable utility had been a mooted point among the experts in gunnery.

It was a most sagacious and fortunate move on the part of Commodore Decatur in bringing his

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war vessels north, for the English Admiral had blocked out a course of action strictly in conformity with what Commodore Decatur had imagined to be his purpose.

President Burr had remained in Washington while the preliminary naval combats were taking place, evolving a scheme for the conquest of Canada and its annexation to the American Union. The army was recruited to the highest point authorized by law; ammunition, ordnance, and all kinds of supplies were quickly collected and means of transportation provided.

But, suddenly, there came a pleading summons from the citizens of Charleston, S. C., that the President should come to their relief. A portion of the British fleet had made an attack upon the city, which had been repulsed, but it was reported that the English fleet would be strongly re-enforced by warships on the way from Halifax, and the inhabitants of Charleston felt that their city was doomed unless energetic measures were taken to provide for its defense.

He arrived upon the field, and infused new ardor into the defense; his enthusiasm soon extended to all classes. New guns were mounted on the forts and many new shore batteries were thrown up. A redoubt was erected upon an island occupying a commanding position. The President had gone to superintend the erection of the battery, as no fear was entertained of an immediate attack by the enemy, but, in some way, the English had learned that the President was on this little island

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which was somewhat remote from the main body of the Americans.

A feeling of fancied security had been aroused and sustained by the fact that for several days none of the smaller craft, sent out as scouts, had been able to discover any signs of a hostile vessel. In all wars, there have been spies and traitors, and the most important events have depended upon the success or failure of their efforts.

Though it cannot be proven, it is undoubtedly true, that the commander of one of the British vessels learned through some spy of the presence of the American commander-in-chief on the little island, and knowing this determined to make a bold attempt to abduct him.

One of the English frigates ran in close to the island and five or six boats manned by marines and sailors quickly approached it and landed upon the shore.

The workmen engaged upon the redoubt were poorly armed and could offer but little resistance to this unexpected attack. The President was taken prisoner and carried on board the British frigate, *King George*, of which Admiral Sir Charles Holland, K. C. B., was in command. The *King George*, when it reached them, signaled the other vessels of the British fleet and then shaped its course towards Halifax, where it was intended to hold the President as a prisoner until the conclusion of hostilities.

The *King George* had not proceeded far upon its way, however, when it was met by the Ameri-

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can frigate, *Alexander Hamilton*, commanded by Commodore Decatur. Stephen Decatur was a descendant of an ancestry in which the most peculiar racial mixture had taken place. He was a typical American sailor; for he was born upon American soil and had gone to sea in company with his father when only eight years of age. When war was declared against the Algerine pirates, Stephen and his brother James had asked permission of their father to join the navy. The old gentleman gave his consent, saying to his wife, "Our children are the property of their country."

Stephen was handsome in both face and figure, an adept in all field sports and games, the incarnation of personal bravery, and, with all these accomplishments, a finely educated gentleman. He had the stolidity of the Dutch character, the gallantry of the French, the Irishman's love for both fighting and fun, and the dogged determination so characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon branch of his ancestry. He was intensely loyal and patriotic and his warlike feelings were raised to the highest pitch of intensity by the arrogance of the British and the contempt which they showed on all occasions for America and the Americans.

He had been a midshipman at nineteen on board the first American frigate, the *United States*; had been captain of the *Constitution* at twenty-five; and now, at thirty-five, was the ranking commodore of the American Navy.

Admiral Holland made the mistake of supposing that the American vessel in sight was the *John*



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*Adams*, a craft much smaller than his own and with a much inferior armament. He remarked to Captain Ludlow, his executive officer:

"It seems strange that the American vessel which tried so hard to get away from us yesterday, and did succeed in eluding us, now has the hardihood to court a conflict with us. I would much prefer to meet an antagonist more worthy of our metal, but this little upstart shall feel its weight before we are through with it."

The vessels were now about a mile apart. The *King George* had the weather gauge and, despite Commodore Decatur's efforts to deprive his antagonist of this advantage, he was unsuccessful. His efforts, however, in this direction, showed the highest order of seamanship, and awoke the admiration of Admiral Holland.

"I don't know, Captain Ludlow," said he, "who the American commander is, but if he will swear allegiance to King George I will procure him a captaincy at once. Captain, bring some of our eighteen pounders to bear upon the enemy and give them a slight indication of what they may expect."

In a few moments there was a sullen roar and a concussion which shook even so steady a ship as the *King George* from stem to stern. A broadside had been fired at the American vessel.

"They are beyond range, Admiral," said Captain Ludlow, with a look of disgust upon his face, "we must run up closer."

To say this was easy but to do it was far more

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difficult. Again, the American commander showed that he knew how to handle a ship with speed and precision, and the British were unable to materially lessen the distance between the vessels.

A full hour was occupied in playing for position, and a look of intense displeasure was depicted upon Admiral Holland's face when he found that he had been out-mancœuvred, and that the American commander had gained the advantage in position for which he had been evidently seeking.

"Order all hands to the guns, Captain Ludlow!" cried the Admiral. "We have been foolish to lose so much time."

Broadside after broadside was discharged at the American vessel which for some time did not deign to respond. Suddenly it seemed to be enwrapped in flame. Its 24-pounders had been trained upon the enemy and sighted with that precision in which the American gunner excels those of all other countries.

A minute after the discharge of the American guns the scene upon the deck of the *King George* was almost indescribable. The effect of the storm of cannon balls, shells, and grape shot was terrific. A score of the King's men lay dead upon the deck, while twice as many were wounded, the majority of them mortally. Captain Ludlow was struck in the face by a grape shot, but, before his body reached the deck, it was cut in two by a cannon ball.

An officer of marines, with eight men, was stand-

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ing not ten feet from the Admiral, when a shell exploded, killing six and wounding the remainder. Strange to say the Admiral was uninjured.

But if the first broadside from the American vessel worked such havoc, what words can be found to paint the picture which the vessel presented after receiving a dozen similar broadsides fired in rapid succession! The foremast had been shot away. The mainmast was cut and splintered and cracked in a dozen places. The sails were riddled or torn into shreds by grape shot and canister. Portions of the masts, broken spars, torn sails to which the rigging was attached, fell to the deck in a confused mass and added to the indescribable confusion which reigned everywhere.

The firing from the American vessel ceased and the smoke lifted. The crew and officers of the *King George* had numbered three hundred. Of these, two hundred and fifty were either dead, dying, or wounded. The Admiral adjusted his glass and saw that boats were putting off from the American vessel. He gave the order: "Prepare to repel boarders!" and the little band of courageous Britons posted themselves at the most advantageous points to meet the attack. The Admiral counted the boats. There were eight of them, each containing at least twenty-five men. The odds would be four to one, but the brave-hearted Admiral awaited the onslaught calmly and fearlessly.

In the bow of the foremost boat, standing erect, was Commodore Decatur. To his drawn sword

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was fastened a white handkerchief. The usual meaning of such a signal would have been a sign of surrender, but Admiral Holland did not believe in miracles and correctly interpreted it as an indication of a desire for a parley. So he gave an order that the American commander and four of his officers should be allowed to come on board.

As Decatur and his companions advanced towards the Admiral they were obliged to step over the bodies of the dead and dying with whom the decks were strewn.

"This looks like murder," said Captain Ralston to the Commodore.

"No, Captain, it looks like death, not like murder," was Decatur's reply.

The commander of the British ship wore the full insignia of his rank. Decatur stopped at a respectful distance and, after bowing, said:

"Admiral, I have sought this interview in order to prevent unnecessary slaughter. You have evidently suffered severely and your vessel is at best but an unmanageable hulk. I demand the surrender of yourself and your ship's company as prisoners of war!"

There was a stern and resolved expression of defiance upon the face of Admiral Holland. In his look there was no indication that he intended to comply with Commodore Decatur's demand, but, before the words with which he was to express his refusal came to his lips, a wild shout, followed by cheer after cheer, arose from the American sailors in the boats. Both Admiral and Commodore

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looked in the direction from which the sound came to learn if possible its significance.

President Burr, while on board the *King George*, had been treated by Admiral Holland with the utmost respect. He looked upon him as a state prisoner of exalted rank. To treat him in any other but the most gentlemanly and courtly manner would be to bring dishonor upon himself, the country which had given him birth, and the King for whose honor and glory he fought. He had given up his own cabin for the use of his prisoner. The President had been allowed, under guard, to walk upon the deck for several hours each day; but, during the remainder of the time, he had been kept confined in the Admiral's cabin. The door was kept locked and there was no other means of egress from his prison. He had not bewailed his condition, but, finding the Admiral's cabin well supplied with instructive books, had devoted all the time not given to rest and recreation to profitable study.

When the firing began, he knew that a conflict was taking place between some American vessel and the one upon which he was a prisoner. What American vessel it was and who was in command he, of course, did not know, but he did not like the idea of being killed like a rat in a pit. The door was locked and too strong to be affected in any way by the strength which he could employ. He knew by the shouts of the officers and the groans of the wounded and dying that a fearful

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carnage was taking place upon the deck above him.

The Admiral's cabin was undoubtedly advantageously placed so far as safety was concerned, for there was no indication of battle within the comfortable well-furnished room; but a chance shot tore through the partition at one end of the cabin, and, passing through the room, lodged itself in the walls of the vessel. Burr was thrown to the floor by the concussion, but soon revived and saw that the cannon ball had opened the way for his escape from the cabin.

He crawled through the aperture and reached the deck of the vessel. Around him could be seen only the dead and the dying. Those who were able to wield a cutlass or a pike had gone to the upper deck to meet the Americans in a hand-to-hand fight.

A gun had been dismounted. The President crawled over the gun-carriage, reached the port-hole and looked out upon the water. What a gladsome sight met his eye! Eight boats filled with American sailors were in plain sight, while, not far off, was an American frigate over which the stars and stripes were proudly flying. By the blue and red pennant, the President knew that the American vessel was commanded by Commodore Decatur, for he was the only man whom he had commissioned as full Commodore.

With that intrepidity and absence of fear of personal danger which were always characteristic of him, Burr leaped into the water, and, being an

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expert swimmer, struck out vigorously toward one of the boats. A dozen willing hands were extended to help him on board. Lieut. Bainbridge, who was in command, could hardly believe his eyes, and yet this man who had leaped into the water from the porthole of the British vessel and was now standing erect in the boat could be none other than Aaron Burr, President of the United States!

"The President!" cried the Lieutenant. The word was taken up by the sailors in the boat. It was heard in the other boats and every eye was turned in the direction of the small, trim, but commanding figure which stood hatless and dripping with water, looking calmly upon the inspiring scene before him.

"A sword! Lieutenant," said the President, and one of the sailors passed him a cutlass. "Lieutenant," the President added, "we will go on board."

"I refuse to surrender!" said Admiral Holland in response to the demand made by Commodore Decatur. The words had hardly escaped from his lips when President Burr jumped over the bulwarks followed by Lieutenant Bainbridge and a dozen American sailors. Decatur and his companions were astonished at the sight which met their gaze and their faces bore strong evidences of this feeling. As the President advanced, Decatur and his companions saluted and then stepped back, so as to allow the President and the Admiral to come face to face.

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"Admiral Holland," said Burr, "I desire to thank you both in my own name and in that of my country for the gentlemanly courtesy and knightly bearing which you have shown in all your dealings with me. I judge from appearances and from what I have heard that there has been a conflict, and that although you have bravely defended your ship, that my Commodore, here —" as he said this he raised his hand and pointed it towards Decatur — "has come to demand your surrender."

"He has done so," the Admiral replied, "and I have refused to comply with his request."

The thought ran through his mind that he had made a bold attempt and had succeeded in abducting the President of the United States, but his scheme to carry him as a prisoner to Halifax had been foiled and he was too proud a man to wish to outlive such an event. Besides, he still clung to the erroneous opinion that the vessel with which he had been engaged was inferior to his own in size and armament and, to his mind, ignominy was attached to such a defeat.

"If that is your final answer," said President Burr, "it is unnecessary for me to say more. The further conduct of the matter now rests with Commodore Decatur."

Decatur stepped forward.

"Admiral," said he, "you and your men must either surrender and come on board my vessel as prisoners or you will all be obliged to sink with the *King George*, for knowing what I know and seeing what I now see —" as he said this he looked



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towards the President who stood with an imperturbable look upon his face, calmly regarding the scene — "I am determined that the English shall never be able to point to this vessel and say that a President of the United States of America was once a prisoner on board of it. We shall sink the *King George* and it is for you to decide whether or not you will give yourselves up as prisoners or go down with your ship."

"I refuse to lower my flag," said Admiral Holland. He looked about him into the faces of the few officers and sailors and marines of the *King George*, but no word of dissent or remonstrance came from them. The American boats returned to their vessel, the President accompanying Decatur. Orders were at once given to resume firing upon the *King George*. One of the shots must have penetrated its magazine for a terrible explosion followed and, when the smoke had cleared away, it was found that the ill-fated British vessel had sunk.

By order of the President, a party was sent to see if any survivors, or the body of the Admiral could be discovered; for it was his intention to have him buried at sea with all the honors which should be accorded to an officer of high rank.

Lieutenant Bainbridge who was sent out in command of the rescue party returned with the body of Admiral Holland. He had been found floating on a portion of the quarter-deck where he had met his fate. His sword was tightly clutched in his hand, while on his face there was an expres-

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sion of set determination as though in death he was still facing the foe and standing ready for the encounter.

He was buried by moonlight; the chaplain of the American frigate reading the Episcopal service for the dead. As the body, encased in its canvas shroud, was lowered slowly and reverently into the water, the President turned to Commodore Decatur and said:

"A brave man deserves a brave man's funeral, no matter under what flag he fights."

The American frigate landed her illustrious passenger at Washington, and the news was soon sent throughout the country that the President, who had so mysteriously disappeared, had returned. The fact of his abduction was known to comparatively few, but the defeat and sinking of the *King George* was soon known to every one.

During the homeward trip, the President gave Commodore Decatur an account of the scene and manner of his abduction and the kindly treatment he had received from the unfortunate admiral.

"Do you know, Decatur," said the President, "I am particularly pleased with one feature of the victory."

"What is that, your Excellency?" asked the Commodore.

"It is this," was the reply. "It is peculiarly gratifying to me that a man-of-war bearing the name of a king has been obliged to succumb to an American frigate named after our most illustrious advocate of monarchy; nothing bearing his name has ever been of service to me before."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### TWO NEW RECRUITS.

THE President realized that the coming conflict would be of the most desperate nature.

The American army was largely increased at his request and moved forward under his personal command to conquer Canada. The enemy was driven from position after position, until, finally, the victorious President-General approached Montreal, the city which Burr had entered nearly forty years before, at the end of his perilous mission from General Arnold to General Montgomery.

Burr, on taking personal command of the army, had left the charge of home affairs in the hands of the Vice-President. One evening as he sat before a table, with a map spread out before him, perfecting his plans for the attack upon the city, an orderly entered and handed him a note.

It contained but few words, but those words must have been of an astonishing nature, for a look of contempt was followed by one of distrust upon the face, which finally resumed its usual placidity of expression. The orderly stood respectfully awaiting the General's answer. Before speaking, Burr held the note in the flame of the candle which stood upon the table. It ignited and

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burned slowly. When it fell from his fingers, a blackened piece of tinder, the President looked up and said simply, "Admit him."

The person who entered was a stout man with a full black beard. His hair was of the same color but frosted with the snow of advanced years.

"By what name do you wished to be called?" asked the President.

"My name is John Benedict," was the reply.

"And you wish to again enter the service of the United States?"

"Yes," was the laconic reply. Then he questioned, "Do you know my reason for coming here?"

"I can imagine it," replied Burr. "You were always a brave man and your presence here shows that that quality has not deserted you. To what position do you aspire?"

"If there is a forlorn hope to be led, I trust you will call upon me."

"I will attach you to my personal staff," said the President, "with the rank of colonel. I will give you every opportunity that you may desire to show your military ability and bravery."

The next day, Colonel John Benedict was introduced to the other members of the President-General's staff.

On the afternoon of the day when Colonel John Benedict became formally connected with the American army, another new recruit presented himself to the sentry who stood before the President-General's headquarters and expressed a de-

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sire to see the commander-in-chief. The sentry laughed good-naturedly, and then said in a gruff voice:

"Get out of here! Don't you s'pose the general's got something else to do than to spend his time listening to complaints from peasants?"

Then, as he glanced at the pretty boyish face, he relented somewhat and added:

"Do you see that tent over there? Go and ask for Colonel Dawson. He is the one who attends to such matters."

"But you don't understand," said the peasant boy, for such he seemed to be. "Let me tell you something."

He motioned the soldier to bend down so that he could whisper to him. Before doing so, the soldier gave him a sharp glance. What the boy said produced an instant effect upon the sentry.

"I will see about it," said he. "I will speak to the orderly."

In a few moments, the sentry returned with the orderly, who bade the peasant boy to follow him. A few minutes later the boy stood in the presence of the President-General.

"Your name?"

"Jean Verviers," the boy replied. He was apparently about sixteen years of age. His hair, dark brown in color and inclined to curl, was very long and covered the back of his neck from view. His complexion was dark, giving one the impression that Indian blood might run in his veins.

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"Your name is French," said the President, "but you speak English."

"Yes," said the boy, promptly. "My mother was English, — my father French."

"Why are you here?"

"I came," said the boy, "to bring you intelligence from within the city. I was told to tell you that General Markham has but five thousand men and that the forts on the west side are but poorly armed and least likely to resist a spirited attack."

"You speak," said the President, "as though you had learned your lesson by heart."

"I had to," said the boy. "I know nothing of war and so your friend made me repeat his message over and over again, until I knew it by heart."

"My friend?" asked the President. "I have heard you mention no name but your own."

"I had not come to it yet," said the boy, and, despite himself, Burr smiled at the nonchalance and lack of awe for his high rank. "What was my friend's name?" he asked.

"He told me to tell you that I came from Louis Desmarais. He said if you did not recognize that name to mention that of Raoul Audigier."

Quick as lightning, there flashed through Burr's mind a remembrance of that day, when in company with his guide Raoul Audigier he had been followed by three British troopers, two of whom they killed, while the third fled. Then he recalled their parting at the door of General Montgomery's headquarters. Raoul had vanished into the dark-

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ness and he had never expected to see him or hear from him again.

"And so," said Burr, "my old friend Raoul — I mean Louis — is still living in Montreal, where I left him so many years ago?"

"Yes," said the boy, "he was for twenty-five years, he told me, the head gardener for the Marquis de Rolletaire. The old Marquis is dead now, but his son Henri, the present Marquis, thinks a great deal of old Louis and allows him to live in a little cottage on the grounds, although he does no work."

"How did you come to know all this?" asked Burr.

"I have been a page for the Countess d'Auxrois; she is the cousin of the Marquis and the most beautiful woman in the world."

"You must have traveled a great deal, young sir, to venture so extravagant an opinion of the beauty of this Countess."

"It is not my opinion," said the boy, "that is what Louis says."

"No doubt, then, she is as beautiful as he says, for he has been all over the world and he ought to know."

"But to my mind she has too much temper, and shows it too often, especially to her pages. But, after all, her cousin Henri got more of it than we did."

"Does this Marquis de Rolletaire intend to marry his cousin, the Countess?" asked the President.

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The next instant, he blamed himself for asking such a question of a servant, but the boy Jean lost no time in answering.

"Oh," said he, "he would marry her quick enough, but she won't have him. You see, she's four years older than he is, so Louis told me, and I heard her tell him once, when he was making love to her in an arbor, that when she married she wanted a man, and not a boy."

"Don't you know that it is wrong to spy upon the actions of those who employ you?" asked the President.

"Oh, yes," the boy replied. "I know it is, and I suppose it is wrong for me to come from Montreal and tell you what Louis told me to, and I suppose it will be wrong for me to go back to Montreal and tell Louis what you tell me to; but, you see, Louis told me that a spy must do what he is told to do, and, if he is caught to die with his mouth shut; but I don't see how a man can do that if they hang him."

Burr could not but be charmed with the *naïveté* of the youth. He motioned the boy to approach the table, and handed him an English guinea. The boy drew back the hand which he had extended, having evidently supposed that the general was going to shake hands with him.

"I take no money," said he. "Louis gave me money to pay for my coming and going, but if you are pleased with the news that I have brought you and it will do you any good, if you will shake hands with me, I will allow no one else to touch it until



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I get back to Montreal; then I will tell Louis and he will squeeze it until he brings the tears into my eyes. He did that when I came away from Rolletaire."

Burr arose from his chair, and, advancing, grasped both the boy's hands in his and gave them a warm pressure. "My boy," said he, "you can shake both of Louis' hands at the same time, now. Tell him that I have not forgotten him, and, when the flag of America waves over Montreal, I shall be happy to renew our old acquaintance."

As the boy reached the door, he turned and said: "I hope when you get there you will come and see us at Rolletaire. I should like to know your opinion of the Countess."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A DAUGHTER OF KINGS.

UPON the balcony of a fine mansion, surrounded by spacious and well-kept grounds, and located in the suburbs of the city of Montreal, stood a beautiful woman. The term woman is appropriately applied to her, for she was at least thirty years of age. She was of medium height and possessed a finely developed and graceful figure. Her hair was raven black, her eyes of the same color, but in them lurked a fire which bespoke her intensity of feeling. This was the Countess Stephanie d'Auxrois.

As her name indicated, she was of French birth. She was not a native of Canada, but of old France. During the Reign of Terror, her father, mother, a sister, and a brother had been ruthlessly murdered by the order of the savage tyrant, Collot d'Herbois (the old-time circus clown), who, located at Lyons, had stretched out his murderous hand in every direction from that city and, after butchering the leading Royalists, had burned their castles and their chateaux to the grounds.

Stephanie would have met with a similar fate but for the fact that at the time of her parents' death, though only three years of age, she was on

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a visit to her uncle, the Marquis de Rolletaire. She had been named for her aunt, *la Marquise*. The sad fate that had overtaken the family of d'Auxrois was escaped by the Marquis de Rolletaire. With his wife and little Stephanie he had succeeded in escaping to Switzerland. From there he made his way to Amsterdam, where he took passage for Canada.

At the beginning of the Revolution he had been far-seeing enough to deposit the greater part of his property in England. When he reached Canada he was able to draw upon these accumulated funds and to build the beautiful mansion to which reference has been made. Within a year after his arrival in Canada a son was born to him, whom they named Henri.

He was pleased with the new country, and felt, under English rule, a greater sense of freedom and security than he had experienced in his native land. Little Stephanie and Henri grew up side by side; they were playmates in their childhood; they were firm friends during that period of life which follows childhood and precedes manhood and womanhood; but, soon after reaching the latter state, a coolness had come between them.

The old Marquis and his wife had died, and Henri had succeeded to the title. He had fallen in love with Stephanie, but she met his advances, at first, in a spirit of banter, afterward with words full of sarcasm. This had been followed by a reserve which precluded any conversation but that of the most commonplace character. The title of

## *A DAUGHTER OF KINGS*

Countess was her only possession; she did not know whether any of her father's property remained, or whether it could be made available. Her uncle had treated her as a member of the family, and although she did not and could not love her cousin Henri as she would wish to love a husband, she had no recourse but to remain in the house of which he was the master.

Shading her eyes with her hand, she looked out over the wide stretch of plain which extended toward the west. What was that she saw? It seemed as though a river of silver was making its way across the plain, but that could not be. While watching this undulating current, her cousin Henri stepped out upon the balcony. They met for the first time that morning, and the usual salutations were exchanged. Stephanie resumed her former position and looked intently at what still seemed to be an onward moving river.

"So they are coming," remarked Henri.

Involuntarily the word "Who?" fell from her lips.

"The Americans," said Henri. "I came directly here from the Citadel and General Markham told me that his scouts had just brought in word that the Americans were advancing in force to besiege the city."

"Who commands the Americans?" Stephanie found herself forced to inquire.

"Their President-General," said Henri. "He who has conquered Spain in two wars, and who is

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now engaging in a final contest with his old enemy, the British."

"Will General Markham defend the city?" asked Stephanie.

"To the last," Henri replied, "but it is a forlorn hope. In the end the city will fall."

"Shall you join General Markham's forces?" asked Stephanie.

"Certainly not," said Henri. "The British conquered Canada and wrested it from our own people. Why should I help them to retain it?"

"I could not rest idle," said Stephanie, "with such a contest impending. If I held the opinion that you do, I should join the Americans and try to avenge the wrongs inflicted upon my countrymen."

"I see no reason why I should take part in the conflict, anyway. It does not concern me."

"It is every man's duty," cried Stephanie, "to fight with the side in which he believes. Had the Royalists of France possessed the bravery of their assailants we should not now be exiles in a strange land. To think that I, a descendant of a line of kings, should have been driven from my native land, which I fear I shall never see again! Had I been a man and able to fight for the King, I never should have left France."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### TOO YOUNG AND NO HERO.

**B**Y noon, the American forces had taken up their positions before Montreal and a demand had been made for the surrender of the city. To this demand the British commander had returned his defiance. The American commander sent word to General Markham, saying that twelve hours would be allowed in which to remove the women and children from the city, which would be bombarded unless promptly surrendered.

An hegira then took place of the defenceless portion of the population, but, to Henri's earnest request and even stern command to leave, Stephanie refused to accede. No, she would remain. If death came to her during the fight, so much the better. She had nothing to live for. Henri, finding that his entreaties and commands were equally futile, determined to press his suit once more and to beg her, if for no other reason, to come with him because he loved her.

Stephanie replied:

"I might go with you because you love me, but I am afraid if I did that you would consider that I went with you because I loved you. That, you

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know, can never be. I have told you so time and time again."

"But why, Stephanie," cried Henri, "have you such an aversion to me? I come of a good family. I am a peer of France. My blood is as good as that of your own family. I am related to you. I am your cousin, and yet you treat me as though I were but a peasant."

"You know why I treat you so," cried Stephanie. "I have told you why many times."

"I have forgotten," said Henri. "Tell me once more, and perhaps I shall not forget."

"I will," said Stephanie. "In the first place, you are not so old as I am. I have no desire to marry, but, if I had, I certainly should not choose a companion younger than myself. Then, again, as you well know, I am descended from a line of kings. I have read their history and they were all heroes; men strong in battle, who never knew defeat, for if it fell upon their arms they had died nobly before the fact was known. Henri, you know you are no hero."

There could be but one result, as General Markham had anticipated, to the conflict between the large army of Americans and the comparatively small force of British who defended the city. Knowing the strength of the garrison and feeling averse to destroying so beautiful a city, General Burr decided to take it by assault instead of compelling the surrender by bombardment.

His large army enabled him to divide his forces

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and to make an assault from so many different points that it was impossible for the defenders to repulse the attacks, and, as a sign of surrender, after a conflict of three hours, the cross of St. George came down and a white flag was run swiftly to the top of the flagpole upon the Citadel.

By one of those chances of fortune which seem to have been foreordained, or perhaps prearranged, the beautiful mansion of M. de Rolletaire was selected by General Burr's chief of staff for the residence of the victorious American commander during his stay in the city. Henri was at heart greatly pleased that the city had been captured by the Americans; for, although he had lived among the English for years, he could never forget the fact that Canada had once belonged to the French and had been taken from them.

He welcomed Gen. Burr with all the politeness and courtesy which had descended to him from a long line of French aristocrats. He found that Gen. Burr spoke French fluently, and he was greatly impressed with the frank and winning manner of the President-General.

The women and children returned to their homes and Gen. Burr gave orders forbidding any interference by his troops with the business or social life of the conquered city.

After his conversation with Gen. Burr, Henri sought Stephanie and communicated to her the intelligence that the American commander had taken up his quarters in the house.

"As you are the lady of the house, Stephanie, in



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fact, and you know I wish with all my heart that you were so in reality, it is proper that you should see him and repeat the words of welcome and of civility which I have already extended to him."

Stephanie accompanied her cousin to the great drawing-room and was presented to Gen. Burr. Henri, feeling that his presence might be considered superfluous by the American general, soon after introducing his cousin, took his departure from the room. It was a momentous instant for both the man and woman who stood facing each other. Gen. Burr had met many beautiful women, but, as he gazed upon Stephanie d'Auxrois, she seemed the incarnation of all that was beautiful in her sex. The man who had always been so fluent in compliment when in the presence of beautiful women, for a moment, stood almost abashed.

And what were Stephanie's feelings? As she gazed upon Gen. Burr's face, there came to her the thought that she had never seen a handsomer man. To be sure, he was not commanding in stature and was slight in figure, but there was in his face a nobility of expression which recalled her long line of kingly ancestry, and, when she looked into his piercing black eyes, a flood of light seemed to leap from them and reach her own; and, above all, he was a hero and she had been from childhood a hero worshiper.

\* A quiet mansion in the dull city of Montreal was not a fit home for such a spirit. She was fashioned to hold her place in a regal court and to accom-

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pany her lover or her husband when he sought the field of battle to meet his foe.

Neither thought of the ordinary commonplaces of every-day life; neither thought that the other would care to hear them, nor to respond to them.

"Mademoiselle," said Gen. Burr, "when you entered the room, my first thought was one of regret that the fortunes of war had forced me to become, no doubt, an unwelcome visitor at your home. But I now feel that the hand of Fate would have been most unkind had it not directed my steps thither."

"Monsieur," replied Stephanie, "your intrusion, as you term it, though unlooked for, is not unwelcome. My cousin and myself belong to French families, and you can readily imagine had no personal interest in the success of the British army. They conquered our people and you have conquered them. I presume your victorious march will not stop here."

"No, lady," replied Gen. Burr, "I shall leave a suitable garrison in the city and shall then move forward with my army to take the last stronghold of British power in America—the city of Quebec."

"And have you captured Halifax?" asked Stephanie.

"I did not," replied Gen. Burr, "but an American fleet, under Commodore Decatur, notwithstanding a sanguinary and determined resistance, secured possession of the city. To me falls the reduction of Quebec, before whose walls forty years ago the American army, of which I was a

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member, met with a crushing defeat. It is my intention to wipe out the memory of that defeat and give to my countrymen a more pleasant recollection."

"And how soon will you advance upon Quebec?" asked Stephanie.

"The day after tomorrow," he answered.

A strange thought came suddenly to Stephanie. She knew that Henri loved her; she knew that she did not love him as she thought a husband should be loved. She would put him to the test. If he refused to do what she asked, it would settle matters now and forever between them. If he acceded, he might so distinguish himself that the fire of love might yet burn in her heart. Turning to Gen. Burr, she said:

"Pardon, Monsieur, what may seem a strange and quixotic request."

"Any request of yours, Mademoiselle," said Gen. Burr, "I shall look upon as a command."

The lady bowed at this deference to her unexpressed wish.

"My cousin Henri," she said, "has had no opportunity to show the brave spirit which he possesses. Were I to ask you to allow him to accompany your army when it advances upon Quebec, should I presume too much?"

"I will appoint him," said Gen. Burr, "as aide-de-camp on my staff."

"A thousand thanks!" cried Stephanie, "and you will give him an opportunity to show his bravery?"

## *TOO YOUNG AND NO HERO*

"If he does not object," said Gen. Burr, "I will place him in the advance and keep him there until Quebec is ours."

When Stephanie told Henri what she had done, he was placed in a most unpleasant dilemma. He could not with honor refuse the appointment which she had secured for him, and yet he felt he could not leave her behind; for, if he fell, there was no one to whom she could look for that counsel, guidance, and support which, although he was her junior, he had always been able to give her; so he said:

"Stephanie, I am willing to go, but I cannot leave you behind."

Burr told Colonel Benedict that he would like to leave him at Montreal in charge of the captured city. The Colonel remonstrated and declared that he wished to accompany the army to Quebec.

"You know, General," said he, "that there are peculiar reasons for my wishing to go with you. My knowledge of Quebec is limited to a long inspection, from the outside, of its fortified walls and a short stay in one of its principal streets where I had a most unpleasant experience."

"I can thoroughly sympathize with you, Colonel," said Burr. "My knowledge of the city is as limited as your own, and I wish to extend my acquaintance. I accede to your wish to accompany me, and we will enter it together."

As Burr spoke these words, there came to the minds of both men the remembrance of a cold,

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wintry night, nearly forty years before, when, through the blinding snow, had been seen a bright flash. A single cannon discharged by a trembling hand had baffled the aims of a brave army and defeated the hopes of a struggling nation.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### A HERO AND HIS WORSHIPERS.

CERTAIN changes in the terms of surrender, in their nature wholly advantageous to the British commander, were agreed to by President-General Burr, at a conference held the same afternoon that the American commander had taken up his quarters in the mansion of the Marquis de Rolletaire.

Burr had been informed that dinner would be served at five o'clock. It was half-past four when, in company with several members of his staff, he alighted from his horse and walked up the broad pathway which led to the grand and imposing entrance to the mansion.

He had traversed but half of the distance when his attention was attracted by a slight noise, and, turning, he saw the young face of Jean Verviers pressed close to the side of a tree, around which he was peering.

"Ah, young man," said Burr, pleasantly, "I had almost forgotten you."

As he spoke he walked toward the tree, the boy advancing to meet him.

"You have entirely forgotten something else," said the boy, evidently unaware that the tone of

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familiarity adopted by him was entirely contrary to military rules or social custom. Burr did not resent the frankness of the youth, for he knew that the tone and manner implied no disrespect.

"And what have I forgotten that you so well remember?"

"You told me to tell Louis—" the boy began.

"Say no more," cried Burr; "you are right. I have been derelict in duty and unmindful of the promise which I made to you and which I told you to convey to him."

"He is waiting to see you," said Jean. "He is too old and weak to come to you. I told him you were very busy, but that you would surely come before dinner."

Burr went to one of his aides and explained the situation to him. Then he followed Jean to the little cottage where Louis Desmarais lived.

The meeting between the two men was quiet but impressive. There was but one spectator, Jean Verviers, who sat down in a corner of the room and watched the meeting with keen interest. The men spoke of events of forty years ago as though they had taken place but yesterday.

"I wish I could go with you to Quebec," cried Louis. "I should be willing to die then and there, if I could follow your victorious army to the steps of the Citadel. But old age has no mercy. My heart will go with you, and instead of my body, infirm and useless as it is, I will send a substitute—my young friend, Jean Verviers."

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"And would you like to come, Jean?" asked Burr, turning to the youth.

"If the Countess will let me go, I should like to please Louis," said the boy.

"Well spoken," cried Burr. "You see, Louis, this young man is regardful both of the rights of his employer and the demands of friendship. I have no doubt that she will let you go, for her cousin Henri, the Marquis de Rolletaire, I have appointed a member of my staff."

"Vive la France!" cried Louis. "Bon Dieu! The old French spirit is not dead, but begging your pardon, General, the Countess is ten times the man that her cousin is. She has the true spirit. I have been over the books with her, and she can trace her ancestry back to the Carlovingian kings. There is not another woman in France with so proud, so grand a lineage."

"She should have returned to France," said Burr. "If Napoleon had seen her he might have made her an Empress."

"Bah!" cried Louis. "That Corsican upstart! No, you are wrong, General—the only time I have ever known you to be."

The old man arose to his feet with a touch of the fire of youth in his eye.

"No, General," he cried again, and this time his voice had the ring of youth in it. "The daughter of Kings should wed only the son of Kings! Excuse me, General," said Louis, as he sank back into his chair. "I have been too hasty; I have said



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too much; old men always talk too much. Tell me your plans. You must not fail this time."

"My plans," said Burr, "are the result of years of thought and study. I have brave and well-disciplined soldiers, led by officers who have been taught the art of war and are skilled in its execution."

"You should have a Frenchman to lead your cavalry," cried Louis.

"Like Napoleon, I have my Murat. My son-in-law, the husband of my only daughter, commands my cavalry corps, which is composed of five thousand picked men. I hold them in reserve until the enemy wavers or my own troops are driven back. Then General Alston turns back the wave of defeat or makes the current of victory a resistless torrent."

"You talk like a Frenchman," cried Louis.

"And I shall fight like one," laughed Burr, "when we storm the walls of Quebec. Impregnable until now, it shall remain so no longer."

At that moment, a servant in livery entered the cottage, and, bowing low, presented the compliments of the Marquis de Rolletaire and of the Countess d'Auxrois, with the added information that the guests had assembled for dinner.

Dinner was over. Stephanie had presided at the repast as hostess, while her cousin Henri had officiated as host of the occasion. Besides General Burr, four American generals, including General Alston, had been invited by Henri to be present with their

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chief. Stephanie, to her surprise, found that three of these generals were accompanied by their wives.

When the ladies retired to the drawing-room, they informed her that they had participated in several campaigns with their husbands, acting as aides upon their staffs. One of the women, Mrs. General Morton, said:

"I can ride a horse as well as my husband. I have no fear of death when I know that my husband, whom I love dearly, is exposed to the same danger that I am. I can carry a message on the field of battle as quickly and as well as any officer, and my husband tells me that I really distinguished myself on one occasion by the bravery which I showed in carrying an order to another general. But, of course, he is prejudiced."

This conversation gave Stephanie another idea, and she resolved to act upon the self-suggestion. When the gentlemen joined the ladies in the drawing-room, Stephanie looked for an opportunity which she soon obtained. This was a private interview with General Burr. She told him the answer her cousin had made when she informed him that he could have an appointment as aide-de-camp on his staff.

"I have heard something this afternoon," added Stephanie, "which surprised me, and yet it seems to open a way out of the dilemma in which my cousin is placed from regard for my welfare. If I could but accompany him, as do the wives of some of your generals—"

"Say no more, Mademoiselle," cried Burr. "I

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shall have to sign two commissions, instead of one."

"I noticed," said Stephanie, "that the general whom you called Joseph—"

"He is my son-in-law," said Burr.

"But why is your daughter not with her husband? Did you not offer her a commission?"

"She wished to come with me," Burr replied. "We are bound together by the strongest ties of affection. She will not have a single happy moment until I once more return and hold her in my arms."

"I believe you," said Stephanie, and her eyes spoke her admiration for the man whom she was addressing, "but that does not tell me why she is not with you."

"Because if she were with me and her husband, she would not have a single happy moment until she returned home and clasped to her bosom her little son—my namesake—Aaron Burr Alston."

"I understand. It is magnificent!" cried Stephanie, forgetting herself and speaking in French. "You are a hero and they all worship you." She arose as she spoke and Burr followed her example.

He spoke in French and Stephanie remarked the purity of tone and precision of inflection and accent.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "you are not yet a heroine, but I am sure you have an army of worshippers. Countess, I am not guilty of flattery when I say that you are a queen among women. If there is a vacant place in your retinue, may not I,

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your humble servant, aspire some day to hold that position?"

Their eyes met; she withstood his earnest gaze for a moment, then her eyelids fell. She abruptly changed the subject.

"I have your promise, then, General, that I may accompany my cousin Henri?"

"It shall be kept," said Burr.

She made a graceful obeisance and rejoined the ladies, who had remarked her long absence.

## CHAPTER XX.

### LOOKING INTO HEARTS.

**I**T was the night before that sanguinary conflict which was to be known thereafter in history as the Battle of the Chaudiere.

President-General Burr sat before a table in his great tent, while around him were gathered his generals of distinction and the most trusted of the subordinate officers. To them he had committed the execution of the details of the plan of battle to be followed on the morrow. Each had been subjected to a rigid questioning to see that he fully remembered and understood the part which had been assigned to him. Then the officers had saluted their ever-victorious commander and took their leave of him, for one and all needed at least a few hours' rest to prepare for the dread work of the coming day.

Burr sat alone. From the expression upon his face it was evident that he was thinking deeply. One of the officers who sought and had gained admittance to the tent to obtain possession of an order which he had inadvertently left upon the table, said to his companions when he rejoined them.

"I don't believe General Burr will sleep a wink

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to-night. He is fighting the battle all over in advance, and I should not be surprised if he routs us all up in a few hours to give us additional orders."

But Burr was not thinking of war at all. His thoughts were fixed upon another subject. If we look into his heart, we shall find that the conflict raging there is one not so easily settled as the defeat of an enemy.

Burr's thoughts were of Stephanie. They went back to the day at Montreal, when he had first met her in the mansion of her cousin, the Marquis de Rolletaire. He had thought her then the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Since his acquaintance with her he had come to the conclusion that her personal beauty was one of the least of her attractions. She was a royal woman, worthy to wear the crown of a queen and to sit upon a throne. He knew that every fibre of his strong nature went out in love to her, but he had not spoken of this love. Now, it was too late. It would be of no use now to analyze the reasons which had led him to postpone a declaration of his passion.

There was no plausible pretext which he could give for seeking her out at this time. On the morrow he might be defeated and his dead body left upon the field. Up to this point he had been ever victorious, but he knew that there was a Nemesis that follows the great and topples them over just before they reach the pinnacle of their ambition. If he fell, and Stephanie could but kneel beside

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him before he died and hear him tell her that he loved her—then he could die content.

Then another thought came to him. Stephanie had volunteered to act as an aide. Supposing that during the battle he should be forced to give her some commission to execute and that while performing her duty she should be killed? What remorse would fill his soul in such an event! A double remorse it would be; for he should reproach himself for not having spoken of his love, and blame himself while life lasted that he had allowed her to expose herself to personal danger.

Then his thoughts went back to Theodosia, mother and child. The latter still lived to love and comfort him, but the woman who had made life so happy in his first home at Albany, and later in the mansion called Richmond Hill, had gone out of his life, but not out of his memory, many years before. "I do not love Theodosia the less because I love this woman more," he said to himself. "I was a fortunate man to win the love of Theodosia's mother. It is almost too much to expect that a double joy of the kind should be given to the same man."

He threw himself upon his couch and was soon asleep.

In an old farmhouse only a few hundred feet from the great tent occupied by the President-General, the ladies who had accompanied the American army were gathered. Stephanie was of the party, but, instead of joining in the merriment

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which reigned supreme about her, she sat in a corner of the room busy with her own thoughts.

One of the ladies approached her and invited her to join in a game of cards.

"I hope you will excuse me," said Stephanie, "but I cannot play cards to-night."

"But why not?" asked the lady, somewhat impatiently.

"Because," was the answer, "I am thinking of the great battle which must take place to-morrow and wondering how many of those who are well and maybe happy to-night, to-morrow, at this time, will be dead or dying."

"It will be plenty of time to think of that to-morrow night," was the reply. "My husband has been in fifteen battles and has never got a scratch. It is true he may die to-morrow and make me a widow, but I shall not cry and look despondent until then, for if he should see me to-night in that condition, it would worry him and perhaps unnerve him for the battle to-morrow."

Stephanie fixed her eyes upon her questioner.

"Whatever fears I may have and however sadly I may contemplate the prospect of the coming carnage, there is no one in the army who will be unfavorably affected thereby."

"Then," said the lady, somewhat pertly, "there is no reason why you should not do the sorrowful act for all of us while we keep on with our game," and she returned to her companions.

"Is she heartless, or fearless?" Stephanie asked herself. "But I will not judge her; I have no right



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to." Then she looked into her own heart to find, if she could, the reason for the forebodings which oppressed her. Should she be honest with herself, and face the truth? Yes, from the day when she had met the President-General at Montreal to this very hour, she had thought him the noblest and grandest of men. The idea that he had any feeling of love for her had never entered her mind. She knew that she came of royal ancestry, but what would that count with a man of the people who had risen to more than kingly power by his own ability?

She tried to shut out the dread sight; for there, stretched upon the field, in the cold grasp of death, she saw the body of the man she loved. If she could but have told him of her love before he died! Then her lonely life would not have been so bitter.

Suppose that he did not die, but was defeated and driven back by the victorious enemy? She would have given the world, if it were hers, to have the right to go to him and speak words of love and comfort in his great extremity.

Stephanie, Countess d'Auxrois, did not sleep that night. She closed her eyes, but she could not shut out the pictures which her fancy conjured up, and it was with a heavy heart that she arose when she was informed that the army would soon be in motion.

At four o'clock Stephanie had mounted her horse and, with the other members of his staff, awaited the orders of the commander-in-chief.

Burr, mounted upon his charger, surveyed the

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field. Chancing to turn in his saddle, his eye caught those of the Marquis de Rolletaire and of the Countess Stephanie. The remembrance of the thoughts which had filled his heart the night before had not been dispelled. Although both knew what was in their own hearts, they could not look into each other's, and see what was mirrored there.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE BATTLE OF THE CHAUDIERE.

THE American troops left Montreal and started upon their march of one hundred and twenty miles to Quebec. This was the same ground over which Burr had gone forty years before when carrying dispatches from General Arnold to General Montgomery. It seemed to him as though he knew every foot of the way.

On their march, they were met by re-enforcements which had been sent forward by the states, and his army was many thousands stronger than it had been before the attack upon Montreal. He determined to follow the same plan of approach which had been outlined forty years before, and which brought his force along the western bank of the Chaudiere River.

The re-enforcements were not in the shape of full regiments; there were battalions, full companies, and parts of companies, to be merged into regiments and companies now under his command. In looking over the roster of these accessions, his eye chanced to fall upon a familiar name. It was that of Capt. Abiel Budlong, and he was in command of a full company.

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The President lost no time in sending for his old friend and companion.

"Hello, Aaron!" cried Abe, as he entered the tent. "I haven't laid eyes on yer since that day I started back to Connecticut to git married."

"Did you arrive in time?" the President asked.

"Jest in the nick," Abe replied. "If I'd been five minutes later I'd been a gone goose."

"You mean," said Burr, with a laugh, "that the little goose would have been beyond your reach and you would have been a discarded gander."

"Wall, I guess that's 'bout it," rejoined Abe. "The parson was 'bout half way through when I rushed in and nearly frightened everybody out of their wits. Old Priestley objected and said Phoebe was not of age, but Phoebe's mother had told her darter that she was, so the old man had to shut up. The parson wanted a license, and I told him I had a license from you, and then he gin in."

"But what became of the other swain?" asked Burr.

"Well," said Abe, "I don't know what happened to him arter I carried him out o' the church and sot him down on the ground. Jest afore I left, old Lem Staples told me that Jake had hired a house-keeper and that they was goin' to git hitched purty soon."

"But how comes it," asked Burr, "if you are happily married to a young wife, that you have left home and joined the army? You are exempt on account of age, if for no other reason."

"I never 've been much on figurin' up exemp-

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tions," said Abe. "I talked it over with Phoebe, and this is the way I put it. 'Now,' says I, 'Phoebe, Aaron and me are old friends; we tried to git inter Quebec together, but we got licked. This time he is bound to git in, and I kind o' want to be on hand when that affair takes place.' Then Phoebe said: 'You jest go. If it had not been for your friend, I should not be Mrs. Budlong,' and she blushed and looked awful purty when she said it. So, yer see, I'm here. Jest as soon as I can plant both o' these feet inside o' Quebec, I promised Phoebe I would come right home."

"And so you shall," said Burr, "and the majority of the army will accompany you. I am anxious to get back to Washington, not so much to assume the reins of government as to see my daughter and grandson."

The British commander of Quebec, Gen. Sir Lewis Fairchild, had heard of the capture of Montreal, and determined that the disaster should not be repeated at Quebec. He had a large and well-disciplined force under his command and resolved to meet the oncoming army of Americans before it could reach the Plains of Abraham and organize for an attack.

This decision on his part led to the battle of the Chaudiere, as it was called by General Burr in his dispatches and by the historians who afterward wrote accounts of the conflict.

It was the most desperately contested battle of the war. The British realized that if defeated and driven back into the city that their final submis-

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sion would be but a question of time, and they resolved to offer the most determined opposition to the advance of the American army and prevent it from crossing the St. Lawrence River.

Owing to the shallowness of the water and other natural difficulties incident to the navigation of the St. Lawrence, the vessels of the British navy were unable to ascend the river, and could therefore offer no assistance to the garrison.

The British warships had gathered at the mouth of the St. Lawrence after their defeat at Halifax. At Gen. Fairchild's suggestion, all the boats that could be spared from the warships, or otherwise obtained, were manned by sailors and marines from the British fleet, and ascended to Québec. Gen. Fairchild proposed to use these boats to convey his men across the river to meet the American army, and also to hold them in reserve as a means of retreat in case he should be defeated and driven back.

As was his wont, Gen. Burr, mounted upon his black horse, occupied a commanding position from which he could view the field of battle. The right of his army rested on the Chaudiere River, while the left was in close proximity to a large forest of gigantic trees. Before him stretched a long plain dotted here and there with slight elevations. At the farther end of this plain could be seen the army of England, massed in battle array.

Gen. Burr was both inventive and wary; he knew that men, and generals of armies, who were but men, were more apt to be governed by what

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they saw than by their imaginations. He did not wait for the enemy to begin the attack, but ordered the initial move himself.

Two batteries, Griffin's and Bowdin's, of twelve brass field pieces each, were ordered to advance to within three hundred yards of the enemy, unlimber and await the signal to open action. What must have appeared to the enemy to be a very small infantry support was sent forward to assist the artillery men in case they were driven back from their guns. Other dispositions of infantry were made, but their exact location did not become apparent until the battle was fully under way.

Bowdin, being the senior captain, was in command of the combined batteries. The American general had made his first move on the chessboard of battle. The British commander made no response to this act of advance, but his own plans were soon made evident. A large force of British infantry advanced to engage the American right flank, which, it so happened, was composed chiefly of Kentucky and Tennessee riflemen. Their fire was so galling that the British officers ordered their men to charge, and they came forward on the dead run.

The American left was destined to meet an onslaught of a much different character. The bugles and trumpets of the enemy were heard sounding afar off, and the King's Dragoons and Lancers, in their handsome uniforms and with their gaily caparisoned steeds, came on, the long plumes of the Dragoons and the pennants of the Lancers

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fluttering and flying in the breeze. Capt. Bowdin saw that his men must meet that most terrific of all onslaughts—a cavalry charge. With his drawn sword in his hand he leaped upon one of the guns. "Steady, men! Steady!" he cried. "Stand ready, but do not fire a gun until I drop my sword and jump to the ground."

Not far in the rear, President-General Burr sat upon his horse, surrounded by his aides. The men wore the Continental army uniform, but for the women who held positions upon his staff a uniform had been devised which was handsome, comfortable and serviceable. These successors of the Amazons of old sat their horses as firmly and put on as martial an appearance as they could, to match that of their husbands and friends. The Countess d'Auxrois wore a uniform similar to those of the other ladies, and gazed upon the scene before her with intense interest. General Burr despatched several of his aides to order up re-enforcements to support the right of the line and others were despatched to the left of the line to warn the commanders stationed there to be on the *qui vive*, and to be sure and make no mistake as to the right moment of entering the fight.

In the meantime, the American centre, composed of the best-disciplined and most reliable troops in the American army, received orders to advance and engage the enemy's centre, and so the battle raged all along the line.

With keen bugle note, the blare of trumpets and the thundering of horses' hoofs, on came the



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King's Dragoons and the Royal Lancers. Not more than one hundred feet separated their advance line from the mouths of the cannon, when Capt. Bowdin dropped his sword and leaped to the ground. This action was followed instantaneously by a deafening roar. It reverberated among the far-off hills, while the ground shook beneath the feet of the combatants as though in the throes of an earthquake. Down went countless men and horses, dead and dying, while the living spurred forward over their prostrate forms only to be met by a hail of bullets from the supporting infantry. The assault was temporarily checked; it took some time for the shattered squadrons to re-form and make ready for another charge; but during this time the cannons had been not only loaded but double-shotted, and the luckless cavalry were subjected to a more murderous volley than before. Then a new danger assailed them, and the reason for Gen. Burr's particular instructions to his commanders on the left of the line became apparent. The forest of gigantic trees which had seemed untenanted was now filled with men, and from every available opening projected the burnished barrel of a musket or a rifle. This enflaming fire was withering; even great numbers and the most heroic bravery could not long withstand death-dealing fire upon both front and flank. It was not to their discredit that the King's Dragoons and the Royal Lancers fell back in order to gain the assistance of their infantry support.

The conflict on the right and in the centre was

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determined but indecisive. On the right the riflemen more than held their own and forced the enemy back, but every foot of ground was desperately contested. In the centre, the British force outnumbered the Americans, and the latter would have been driven from their position had not Griffin's and Bowdin's and other batteries been ordered to adjacent eminences, from which they could send shot and shell into the ranks of the enemy.

The British commander now realized that he had made a fatal mistake in undertaking to cope with the American forces without the assistance of field artillery. The fact had been that he was not well provided with field ordnance, and, besides, the transportation of what little he had across the St. Lawrence and its safe return had been looked upon as an impossibility. He had counted upon the desperate charge of the Dragoons and the Lancers to turn the left flank of the American line, while his infantry forces pressed forward against their centre and right. He determined to make another attack on the American left, but this time the infantry were to advance, the remnants of his cavalry squadrons being held in reserve.

Gen. Burr surveyed the scene with his field glasses. He saw the movements going on at the enemy's right and divined their purpose. It was now his turn to emulate the tactics of the British commander, but, he thought, with better prospect of success. He turned in his saddle, intending to give the order for the movement to one of his aides. To his surprise he found that but one

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remained by his side, and that one was the Countess d'Auxrois. No, he would not send her. One of the other aides would return soon; it would not be too late then.

But Stephanie had seen the look upon his face and knew what it meant. She rode up and saluting, said:

"General, you must not do me an injustice. It is my duty to receive the order which you just now turned to give me. It will afford me pleasure to execute it."

Burr saw that she had divined his thoughts, but he still hesitated.

"You do not trust me," she cried, and the face of this daughter of kings betrayed her feelings. "I can but fail," she said, hoarsely, "but I will not, unless they kill me! Think, General! A moment lost now may turn victory into defeat."

He could not resist this appeal. He gave her the order and she galloped across the field of battle on her perilous mission.

Burr saw long before she reached his side again, her face red from the physical exercise and the excitement of her long ride, and her dark eyes lighted up by the enthusiasm of the moment, that his order had been delivered and was being promptly carried out.

From their hiding place in the forest, the enfilading force swept quickly into the open field and formed in line of battle. At the front, near the centre of the line, was a regiment of Connecticut troops; one of its officers was Capt. Abiel Budlong.

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The battle now raged on the left as it did in the other parts of the field. For an hour, the rattle of musketry, the sharp crack of the rifles, the roar of the cannon and the shrieks of exploding shells arose from all parts of the bloody field upon which two great nations were contesting for supremacy. It was not a question of bravery, of arms, or of dogged pertinacity. It must have been a question of generalship, for, at the end of the murderous hour, the British forces were driven back, both right, and left, and centre.

During the desperate conflict which had taken place between the American left and the British right, Capt. Budlong had received a bullet wound in the right leg. The wounded limb grew numb, but Capt. Budlong still pressed forward, encouraging his men. But the strongest physical frame has its natural limit of endurance, and Abe soon found that his had been reached. He fell to the ground; one of his men ran to his aid, but Abe found that the injured leg would not sustain him, and he was obliged to sink once more upon the blood-stained turf. The command of his company devolved upon the first lieutenant, and the men moved forward in pursuit of the retreating enemy.

Gen. Burr, with his glasses, scanned every part of the field. He realized that the time had come for his Murat to complete the victory which now seemed assured. He selected the young Marquis de Rolletaire to convey to Gen. Alston the word to advance, and the American cavalry under his command soon deployed into line. Their uniforms

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were not so gaudy, nor were their horses so bravely decked out, but their swords were as sharp and their right arms as strong as those of their British foemen.

Abe saw that the American cavalry was advancing, and he felt sure that he should be crushed by the oncoming squadrons. He raised himself upon his left knee and surveyed the field. Everywhere the terrible work done by the American batteries was visible. Men and horses, King's Dragoons, and the Royal Lancers lay in winrows. Each of these rows had a sinuous movement like that of a great serpent. Abe knew what this meant. It was caused by the efforts of those not seriously wounded to escape from their confinement beneath the bodies of the dead and dying, so as to get a breath of fresh air, and utter an appeal for a drink of water, which there was no one to supply.

Abe realized that what was to be done must be done quickly. He espied a rock some forty feet distant, and, wincing with pain, crept toward it. He was delighted to find that he could probably save his life, for the squadrons would be obliged to part when they came to this rock.

He had hardly reached this place of safety when he heard a cry of despair. He found that it came from one of the King's Dragoons, who had been seriously wounded. Abe's heart was large. He felt a big touch of humanity for his wounded foe. Lame and weak as he was, he succeeded in getting the British trooper into the place which he had occupied. Then, despite the pain which it caused

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him, he dragged himself to the top of the rock. As Abe sat there and viewed the charging host, he thought he had never seen anything so grand and imposing. At the call of their general ten thousand spurs had been driven into the sides of their horses by five thousand cavalymen eager to meet the foe.

The British infantry were formed to repel the attack, and, before the squadrons reached the place where Abe was seated a number of the American troopers had fallen from their horses.

An idea struck Abe. It might succeed and it might not, but it was worthy of a trial. Invention is the natural heritage of a Connecticut Yankee, and Abe had quickly concocted a plan which promised not only safety, but another opportunity to cross swords with the enemy.

As Abe had anticipated, the American soldiers were obliged to rein in their horses in order to divide and pass on either side of the rock. Abe's quick eye caught sight of a riderless horse, which, by chance, passed close to the rock, in fact was crowded against it by the surging line of horsemen. Quick as lightning, Abe carried out the plan which he had formed. He threw his uninjured leg over the horse's back, slipped into the saddle, took up the reins, drew his sword from its scabbard, and dashed forward with the troopers.

Human valor could do nothing against such a resistless charge. Exhausted and dispirited, the British fell back. Soon their orderly retreat was turned into a disastrous rout, and both infantry

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and cavalry fled toward the banks of the St. Lawrence in the hope that the boats moored there would be able to convey them to a place of safety on the opposite side of the river.

Commodore Decatur, after taking Halifax, had not been willing to rest idly upon his laurels. Many of the British warships, when the defeat of their navy became known, had sailed away, no one knew whither. Commodore Decatur felt sure that they had not returned to England. "No," said he to one of his staff captains, "the English may be defeated and be obliged to retire temporarily from the conflict, but they never acknowledge that they are beaten as long as a ship or a man remains. We shall find them up North," he added, and turning the bow of his flagship in that direction he sailed on, followed by the other vessels of his fleet.

As he had anticipated, the British fleet was found lying at anchor at the mouth of the St. Lawrence. Another naval battle took place, and this time the result, even from Commodore Decatur's point of view, was decisive. Every British ship was destroyed or captured; then Commodore Decatur learned of the boat-fleet which had been sent to the assistance of Quebec. Several of the fastest sailors in the American fleet were sent back at once to Halifax, with instructions to the admiral in command there to despatch, in their place, six light-draught gunboats, which had been built at President Burr's request, though their construction had been strongly opposed by many of the Senators and Congressmen. The Secretary of the

## *BATTLE OF THE CHAUDIERE*

Navy had argued on the floor of the House that these light-draft vessels would be of inestimable service in policing the waters in which lay the insular possessions of the United States, and would also be of great service in the harbors and rivers of the great Atlantic and Gulf seaports. His argument had prevailed, the bill had been passed and the boats constructed.

When the gunboats arrived, Decatur took up his quarters on one of them, and, followed by the remaining five, sailed up the St. Lawrence River.

If the defeated British army, when it arrived at the banks of the St. Lawrence to enter the boats there, thought that the sails of the oncoming vessels were those of British men-of-war coming to their assistance, they were soon doomed to experience bitter disappointment.

As the graceful craft came within scope of natural vision, the Stars and Stripes were seen flying from peak and masthead. To attempt to cross the river under such circumstances was useless. The fleet of boats upon which Gen. Fairchild had depended in case of defeat could be of no possible service to him. There were but two courses open to him; he must either surrender, or cause the needless destruction of the lives of the remainder of his army. As the American flotilla came within range, both the boats and the defeated army were huddled together promiscuously on the river bank, and Gen. Fairchild sent a flag of truce to Gen. Burr, with a request that he would name the terms of surrender.



## THE CLIMAX

Under the circumstances, Gen. Burr could well afford to be magnanimous. He quickly formulated the terms of capitulation; the men were to give up their arms, the officers to retain their side arms. Officers and men were to become prisoners of war and sent under escort to Montreal, where they were to be interned until the close of the campaign.

Then General Burr sent an aide to command the presence of his son-in-law, Gen. Alston, to whose charge he proposed to commit the captives. But Gen. Alston could not be found. Searching parties were then sent to examine the battlefield, and one of them soon returned with the dead body of the American Murat.

When Gen. Alston received the order from the hands of the Marquis de Rolletaire to charge the wavering column of the enemy, he lost no time in obeying the General's commands. At the head of his splendidly equipped force of five thousand cavalrymen he dashed forward, sword in hand. They were met by a murderous volley of musketry, which mowed down the front ranks of the horsemen.

Rising in his stirrups and brandishing his sword, Gen. Alston, under the supreme influence of the moment, cried out:

"Give 'em h—l, boys! Give 'em h—l!"

The words had scarcely fallen from his lips before he was struck in the chest by a rifle shot. It entered his lungs, causing an internal hemorrhage. The General was in perfect physical condition and

## *BATTLE OF THE CHAUDIERE*

a man of great vitality. His service in the field had greatly increased his physical strength. He did not realize that he had received his death wound, for he drove the spurs into his horse's sides and rode forward at the head of his command. Even as he rode, his life blood ebbed away. His lower limbs clung still closer to the almost frantic steed and his stiffened right arm was still raised with the fingers tightly clenched upon the hilt of his sword. His eyes were sightless, and his lips could utter no further word of command. Yet on he rode, a dead man leading the charge of thousands of living ones!

Finally, the noble horse which had borne him into the fight was struck down, and master and horse lay dead side by side on the bloody field.

Gen. Burr selected a little glade that lay amid a forest of gigantic trees as the last resting place of his beloved son-in-law. As he stood, surrounded by his staff, all with uncovered heads, awaiting the arrival of the chaplain who was to conduct the burial service, his thoughts reverted to the wife and little son of the dead hero. "Poor Theodosia!" he said to himself. "This will be a sad blow to her; but I have made her as brave as a Spartan woman at heart, and she will exult that her husband died gloriously in the moment of victory."

The service was over, and four strong men, their eyes full of tears and their faces speaking the sadness which they did not wish to conceal, stepped forward to place the body of their dead commander in the grave. Gen. Alston's right hand

## *THE CLIMAX*

still tightly clenched the hilt of his sword. The chaplain stepped forward:

"Remove the sword from his hand," said he. "His family will wish to keep it as a sacred heirloom."

His words were overheard by the President-General.

"No," said he. "Let it remain where it is. Bury it with him. A dead soldier can wear upon his breast no prouder badge of honor than his unsheathed sword."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CLIMAX!

GEN. CONGREVE, who had been left at the head of the British garrison in Quebec by his commander-in-chief, Gen. Sir Lewis Fairchild, soon learned of the fate which had befallen the main body of the English army. He was a brave and resourceful officer, and proceeded to take energetic measures for the defense of the city. His first move was to send a strong force to the bank of the St. Lawrence, which lay southward of the city, in order, if possible, to delay if not to stem the passage of the American troops across the river. But he had not counted upon a very valuable ally which had come to the assistance of the Americans. Commodore Decatur, with his flotilla of gunboats, passed by the mouth of the St. Charles and under Cape Diamond, whose embattled front and jutting crags rise more than three hundred feet above the level of the river.

He ran his light-draught vessels in close to the river bank and opened fire upon the troops sent out by Gen. Congreve, and they were soon forced to retire within the fortifications.

The boats which Gen. Fairchild had intended to use to convey his victorious troops and prisoners

## THE CLIMAX

of war back to Quebec were utilized by Gen. Burr for the transportation of his own army, the gun-boats carrying the American field-pieces. As the American cavalry could be of little use in making an assault upon a fortified town, the majority had been sent with the British prisoners of war to Montreal, only a few companies being retained for such mounted service as might be necessary.

The presence of mind and conspicuous gallantry shown by Capt. Budlong during the cavalry charge had been brought to the attention of the commander-in-chief. By his order, Abe was transferred from the regiment of Connecticut infantry and assigned to the captaincy of one of the cavalry troops. Abe was delighted with the change, for he felt that he would be able to enter Quebec in company with the general whom he admired and the friend whom he loved.

The American army was finally drawn up on the Plains of Abraham, as that of the British General Wolfe had been years before; this time Americans faced Englishmen, instead of Englishmen facing Frenchmen. But the result was destined to be the same, although the conflict was the most bloody and desperate that had ever taken place upon that field.

Before ordering the final assault, Burr called his officers together and thus addressed them:

*"Soldiers of America:* You stand upon historic ground. It was upon this very field that Wolfe died in the moment of victory. As he turned his eyes toward the city, even as we turn ours now, he

## THE CLIMAX

heard the cheers of the soldiers and was informed that the enemy was retreating within the gates of the city. Like a brave soldier he died, happy when he knew that with his death had come victory to the army which he led.

"The issue of the coming fight is not uncertain. That city, strongly fortified as it is, must surrender! But in the conflict many of us will fall to rise no more. It may be my fate to meet death upon this field. Men, raise your right hands and swear by your love of country that if I should fall in the coming attack you will not falter, but will press on, obedient to the brave officers who still live to lead you, and that you will not stop in your victorious march until you have planted our flag upon that Citadel from which now waves the flag of the enemy.

"Forty-one years ago on this very field Montgomery fell dead at my side. You all know the history of that battle—a terrible defeat for the American forces; but this time, men, history will not repeat itself, and to-morrow we will send the news to our expectant countrymen that the last stronghold held by a foreign power in North America is in our possession, there to remain forever!"

The air rang with the cries of the men. They cheered and threw their caps high in the air as a signal manifestation of their determination and patriotism. Then a loud voice called out:

"Three cheers for the Napoleon of America!" and they were given with a will.

## *THE CLIMAX*

Not a muscle of Burr's face moved, nor did he give the slightest sign that he had heard the words or knew the meaning of the cheers. Turning to an aide-de-camp, he gave an order. In less than a quarter of an hour the line of battle was formed and all was in readiness for the first attack.

Thrice was the American army driven back from this almost impregnable fortress. Then a storming party of about three thousand men was formed, and many officers rushed forward to ask the commander-in-chief that they might lead this body of men to victory. Some of them were attached to minor commands, and, to the surprise of the other generals, one of them, Colonel John Benedict, was called upon to lead the fourth assault. Then occurred the most desperate engagement of the war. The American advance was mowed down by the continued cannonading and volleys of rifle shots from the parapets. One thousand dead and wounded Americans lay upon the Plains of Abraham. Colonel Benedict had been wounded thrice, but not seriously. He called upon his men to make a final assault. Burr held another force of five thousand men in reserve to follow up an advantage if it should be gained, or to continue the attack should Benedict be again repulsed. Burr in war had only one object in mind, and that was victory. He had never acknowledged the possibility of complete defeat.

Led by Colonel Benedict, the forlorn hope made its final charge. This time they went up the ladders

## THE CLIMAX

and the opposing forces were pushed back at the point of the bayonet. Quebec was theirs!

The victorious Americans pushed forward into the heart of the city, and were soon gathered in the great square surrounding the Citadel. The sun was setting in the west. Its last bright rays lighted up the flag of Britain, upon which, united in close embrace, were the crosses of St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick. Gen. Burr, accompanied by the members of his staff, rode into that portion of the enclosure which had been reserved for them.

The signal was given and England's flag came slowly down. The Stars and Stripes quickly took its place.

Every member of the American army looked proudly upward at these visible evidences of defeat and victory. The Countess Stephanie turned to her cousin and said:

"Now, Henri, you and I are both heroes."

The Marquis caught quickly at the supposed meaning of her words, and, leaning toward her, said:

"Then your great objection to our union has been removed?"

Stephanie may have answered, but at that moment the cheers of the conquering army drowned every other sound.

The battle had been won, and Aaron Burr had reached the climax of his ambition as a military leader.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### WHO WAS COLONEL JOHN BENEDICT?

**I**T was thought that Colonel John Benedict had received his death wound. This opinion had been coincided in by all of the army surgeons who had been in attendance upon him. At the dying man's request, news of his condition was sent to Gen. Burr, accompanied by a message to the effect that Colonel Benedict wished for a private interview with the President before his death.

Gen. Burr at once made his way to the bedside of the wounded officer. When he arrived, he was informed that Colonel Benedict was in a very low condition, and that the surgeons were administering stimulants in order to furnish him with sufficient strength for the contemplated interview, which Colonel Benedict insisted must be of long duration, as he had much to say.

While waiting in an adjoining room, Burr's thoughts reverted to the military career of Colonel Benedict during the Revolutionary War. He had known of this man's intrepid bravery at Saratoga; when ordered under arrest by his superior he had disregarded the order and with a body of men had won that glorious victory from Burgoyne which

### *COLONEL JOHN BENEDICT?*

turned the tide of war and made sure the success of the American Revolution.

Then there came to Burr the remembrance of a conversation which had taken place a few days after the one on which he had appointed Colonel Benedict as a member of his staff.

"Why are you here?" he had inquired.

The man had answered:

"Do you not know that there is in the mind of a murderer a horrible fascination in the body of his victim which brings him back once more to gaze upon it?"

"In your dreams," Burr had asked, "have you never had visions of a scaffold?"

"I hope to die a nobler death," the man had replied, "although I do not deserve it. It rests with you, General Burr, whether you will disclose my identity to the authorities when, no doubt, the scaffold will become a reality, or give me an opportunity to lead some forlorn hope, and, by my death, atone in some slight degree for my past misdeeds."

"The list of these misdeeds is a long one," Burr had remarked. "You were always a brave man, but you were never a wise one. There were ugly rumors afloat about the misappropriation of funds intended for the payment of soldiers under your command. This was to my mind an even more heinous offence than the one for which you have been judged, because you were successful in robbing your fellow-soldiers while your other scheme miscarried, and your country was benefited rather than harmed by the course you took."

## THE CLIMAX

When Burr entered the room and took a seat at the bedside of Colonel Benedict, a look of gratification showed itself upon the face of the dying man.

"Are we alone?"

"Yes," said Burr, "and secure from intrusion. I gave orders that no one was to be admitted to the room while I remained here. You have something to say to me?"

"Yes," said Colonel Benedict, "I have much to say to you. The brandy that the doctors gave me has put new life into my veins, and I feel that I shall be able to tell you all. You know much, but you don't know the whole truth. She is dead and I soon shall be. I can speak now."

Burr leaned toward the dying man so that no word might escape him.

"Don't speak too loudly, and don't get excited—it will exhaust your strength."

"You remember," Colonel Benedict began, "that when camp was broken up at Valley Forge and Gen. Washington started to intercept Sir Henry Clinton, that the wound in my leg troubled me so that I was unable to keep with the main army. I was ordered to take charge of the troops which were to occupy Philadelphia after its evacuation by the British. Up to that time, my business affairs and my army experience had been the great events of my life, but in Philadelphia I was destined to meet with a new sensation, the result of which has made me the man that I am. I fell in love.

### *COLONEL JOHN BENEDICT?*

"On all sides, it was conceded that Margaret Shippen was the most beautiful young woman in Philadelphia. Her father was a Tory, and I soon found that his daughter was a strong adherent of King George. But what man thinks of politics or of nationality when he is in love—especially so deeply in love as I was?

"I learned that Miss Shippen had been the belle of the city during its occupation by the British. A score of British officers, younger, handsomer, and wealthier than myself, had solicited her hand, but to all of them she had turned a deaf ear. Her favorite among them was Major John Andre, but, as she told me afterward, at the beginning of her acquaintance with the young British officer she had told him that their relations could only be those of friendship and that if he ventured to talk love to her that very act would sever the friendly bonds.

"You know, Burr, the man who loves fighting for fighting's sake is always ambitious to win the favor of beautiful women."

As Colonel Benedict uttered these words, Burr nodded. Colonel Benedict looked toward the table which stood beside the bed.

"Could I have a little more of that brandy?"

After drinking it, he went on:

"I carried on my courtship in true military style. My fair enemy capitulated and we were married. We lived happily together until some time after our arrival at West Point, to the command of which I had been ordered. Being so far removed

## THE CLIMAX

from the city, Mrs. Arnold was unable to obtain those articles of feminine finery so dear to women's hearts. At last she prevailed upon me to allow her to write to Major Andre, who was in the city, to obtain some desired articles and have them sent to her. I arranged for the transmission of her letter and the return of the reply, thinking, of course, that it was to be but one instance, and not to be repeated. In this I was deceived. Means of communication having been opened, as I learned afterward, letters and parcels passed almost daily between Major Andre in New York and Mrs. Arnold at West Point.

"As is my nature, I loved her passionately. You can see how impossible it was for me after I discovered that the means of communication which I had supplied her were being used for treasonable purposes—you can see, General Burr, how utterly impossible it was for me to disclose the fact and make it known to all that my wife was an enemy to the country which I had sworn to serve. I reasoned with her; I pleaded with her to have some regard for my name and my honor. She declared that her loyalty to her king rose superior to what she owed to me.

"In despair, to save her, I became a partner in her plot; in fact, from the very necessity of the case, I became the chief criminal. Andre was arrested and the plot disclosed. I thus became known and execrated as the first and only traitor during the American Revolution."

## *COLONEL JOHN BENEDICT?*

At the close of the conversation, Burr said to the dying man:

"What shall I say to the people?"

"What you will," replied the Colonel. "Only let them know the truth. That I am penitent, my return to America shows. That I wish to atone, my acts and my death will attest. It was the best I could do, but, after all, it is but little."

The wounded man lay for several minutes with his eyes closed. Burr thought the end had come, but it was not so. Colonel Benedict opened his eyes and glanced about the room. He finally fixed his gaze upon his army coat and hat which hung upon the wall near the foot of the bed. Exerting all his strength he raised himself to a sitting posture. Despite Burr's remonstrances he arose from the bed and stood upright.

"By your kindness, Burr, by your mercy, by your confidence, I am able to do what I feared I should never have the happiness of doing."

"What is that?"

Benedict pointed; Burr understood and brought him his coat and hat and sword. As Benedict fastened on his belt and hung his sword at his side, he cried:

"Thank God, I shall die with the old uniform on after all!"

Even as he spoke, his strength gave way and he fell exhausted upon the bed. Burr summoned the surgeon, but it was too late.

Aids were dispatched and in a short time the members of the President-General's staff were

## *THE CLIMAX*

gathered about the bedside of the dead soldier. Then Burr told his officers the real name of the man upon whose face, in death, there was a look of contentment.

The news was received in silence. Only one officer spoke, and then in an undertone. Burr's quick ear detected the sound and at his command the officer repeated what he had said.

"I don't think," were the officer's words, "that this Colonel Benedict deserves any particular credit, under the circumstances, for what he did. It kept a good man from having the great opportunity to distinguish himself which was given to this—" Traitor, he would have said had he finished his speech, but the President-General did not wait for him to do so. Turning to his officers, he said:

"If ever a man needed an opportunity to show his repentance and make an act of atonement, this man did. Good men do not require such opportunities." Pointing toward the dead man, he added:

"Perhaps like the penitent thief, he, too, to-day is in paradise!"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE HAND OF THE ASSASSIN.

**M**RS. Theodosia Burr Alston and her son were not residents of the White House during her father's absence with the army in Canada. The Executive Mansion was occupied by the Vice-President who, under the terms of the Constitution, became Acting President during Burr's absence from the country. The President, before his departure, had rented a small but comfortably appointed house for the use of his daughter.

He had felt that if she remained in the White House it would give an opportunity for carping critics to publish articles in the newspapers which although they would not have ruffled his equanimity, would have caused deep distress to his more sensitive daughter.

Every wife and mother who has been through a similar experience can realize Theodosia's feeling during the absence of her husband and father. When a letter was received it was opened with trembling fingers. She first glanced at it to see if the seal were of black wax. Then she looked at the address; if it were in her father's handwriting, it might contain news of her husband's death. If



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from her husband, it was possible that it brought intelligence of some injury to her father, or perhaps his death upon the field of battle.

Upon a morbidly sensitive nature such recurring shocks could not have but a prejudicial effect. It was no wonder, then, that one day, when a letter was brought to her by her maid her quick glance discovered that it was sealed with black wax, that after closing the door in order that her agitation might not be observed, she staggered to the nearest chair and fell heavily upon it. The letter fell from her nervous grasp to the floor, but fortunately the black seal was not uppermost.

For fully ten minutes she sat, unable to gain sufficient mental strength to bend and raise the letter from the floor. When she did so she saw that the letter was from her father. What did this portend? It must mean that her husband was dead. Half an hour passed before she broke the seals and learned the dreadful truth.

MY DEAR THEODOSIA:

Before you break the seals of this letter your quick mind and active brain will have divined that it contains sad news. You are eager to learn the extent of your loss, and I will not keep you in a state of dread suspense. Yesterday morning, while the sun was shining brightly upon the green woods and the blue river, in a little glade surrounded by giant forest trees, we dug a grave and laid to rest the body of your husband.

If you look at death as I have taught you to

## *THE HAND OF THE ASSASSIN*

look upon it, when you read these words, the letter will not drop from your hand, but you will read on for you already know the worst—the best it is my pleasure now to write. He died nobly while leading a victorious charge of the cavalry under his command against the enemy. Our victory was complete, and to him more largely due than to anyone else. He died fighting the foe and at the head of his men. I am forced by the laws of military etiquette and procedure to view the battle from a far off. It was Joseph's glorious privilege to meet the enemy hand to hand.

The day after to-morrow we shall take formal possession of Quebec, for by that time the terms of capitulation will have been settled upon. I will write you a full account of the proceedings which, to gratify our officers and men, will be conducted with great pomp and solemnity. I care little for this. I would I were back at Washington to comfort you, my dear one, in your bereavement.

From your loving father,

A. Burr.

The majority of women, even in those days, upon receiving such unhappy tidings would have sought relief in tears. This would have been wise and not unwomanly. But to Theodosia no tears would come. Why should she cry? When she had parted from her husband he had said, and she had re-echoed the words in her heart, that they probably would never meet again on earth. The position that he held and the duties that he per-

## THE CLIMAX

formed were the most hazardous of any in the army.

As her father had said, he would never consent to follow his men; he insisted upon leading them in every battle. Such being the case the odds of Fortune were against him. He had won many times—but this time he had lost.

But why should she cry? He had died as he had lived—an honest, brave, courageous man. He left to his wife and son a name surrounded with that halo which only military glory affords. She was so proud that her husband had met his fate so nobly that it gave her strength, and the possession of this strength prevented her from giving way to that allowable weakness which would end in tears.

There came a light tap at the door. Then a voice outside said:

“May I come in?”

The mother could not speak but, opening the door, admitted her son, a youth of about fifteen. No one could look at him without remarking in his face, in the look of his eye, and his proud carriage, that he came of what in the Old World would have been called—of noble family.

He did not see the letter with the black seal which his mother held in her hand and, dropping into a chair, took up a copy of Plutarch's Lives which lay upon the table near him.

Another surge of pride went through Theodosia's slight but supple figure. What a handsome and noble-looking son she had! What a proud lineage belonged to this boy—her boy; his father

## *THE HAND OF THE ASSASSIN*

had just died gloriously upon the field of battle; his grandfather was the leader of a victorious army and the President of the United States; his great-grandfather had been a man of extensive learning, a great preacher, and the president of a renowned institution of learning; his great-great-grandfather had been one of the most noted theologians of his time and also a college president. What other American boy could boast of such a proud heritage of ancestral names?

But the sad news must be broken to her son. How was she to do it? Looking up, she said quietly:

"What are you reading, Aaron?"

"Plutarch's Lives," was the reply. The mother took the cue so innocently supplied.

"What is the noblest fate that can happen to a soldier?" she asked, her voice still low and sweet. The boy, true to his lineage, replied:

"To die gloriously in battle at the moment of victory as Gen. Wolfe did."

"Put down your book, Aaron," said his mother. "Draw your chair close to mine, put your arm about me and let me rest my head upon your shoulder." The boy did as he was bid without a word or look of questioning. Then she passed the letter to him, saying:

"Read me that letter, Gamp. It is from Gampillo."

As the boy read on, his face flushed. Then the tears sprang to his eyes. He looked at his mother's face. Her eyes were tearless.

## THE CLIMAX

"You do not cry, mother," he said. "I must be as brave as you are. I will not cry for your sake."

Then they talked together for an hour, comforting each other, consoling each other, congratulating each other.

At last the boy said:

"Only Grandpa is left now. I hope God will preserve his life and bring him back safe to us."

Theodosia re-echoed the prayer, for such it seemed to be, in her heart and wondered what was taking place in Quebec that day. She looked at the clock. It was high noon.

The terms of capitulation to which Gen. Burr had referred in the letter to his daughter had been arranged between him and Gen. Congreve. As he had said in his letter, the glorious entry of the American troops into the city was to be made the occasion of great rejoicing, not only by the victorious army, but by the French residents who, without stopping to think of the possible gain that would come to them from American rule, were disposed to hail with rejoicing their release from the British domination.

The city had been gaily decorated by the French residents with the tricolor—its hues of red, white, and blue being the same as those of the glorious banner of America. The red-crossed flag of England was nowhere in sight, and from over the doors of many public buildings and houses of public resort, signs which had borne testimony to the existence of British rule had been removed, tem-

## THE HAND OF THE ASSASSIN

porarily, at least. Gen. Burr had given at Quebec, as he had at Montreal, strict orders that the business, social, or religious actions and observances of the public should not be interfered with by the military.

The streets were lined with eager and expectant throngs as the advance of the great American army entered one of the city gates and proceeded through the principal streets to the great square in front of the Citadel. As they had borne the brunt at the beginning of the great battle, the Kentucky and Tennessee riflemen, led by Gen. Andrew Jackson, were the first to enter the city and to receive the acclamations of the waiting throngs. They marched in open order with their rifles at right shoulder shift. They wore their hunting jackets and coonskin caps. Many of them, who had left off temporarily the work of killing Indians to slay their fellow white men, wore gaudily-embroidered moccasins instead of army shoes upon their feet.

Behind them came regiment after regiment, sadly depleted in number, it is true, from the casualties of battle, wearing the handsomest military uniform that man has ever devised—that of the Old Continentals—in buff and blue. They were as resplendent as if they had been covered with gold and silver, lace and kingly decorations.

Then followed the pride of the American army—its great body of disciplined cavalry. At the head rode the President-General accompanied by the members of his staff. Just behind them was a

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riderless horse which was led by two aides-de-camp who had been attached to the staff of the late Gen. Alston. Closing the grand procession came the artillery whose guns had caused such havoc in the ranks of the King's Dragoons and the Royal Lancers.

The United States generals, Scott, Taylor, Claiborne, and other American commanders, were unknown to the majority of those who gazed at them, but they rode proudly at the heads of their respective commands. The air was filled with bugle calls, the peal of trumpets, the roll of drums, and the music of the military bands. Before the last battery had entered the city gates, the guns were unlimbered and a Presidential salute was fired to indicate to the citizens of Quebec that the occupation was complete.

Couriers had been dispatched to Washington and Halifax with the news, and what was made known by the peals of the cannon to the inhabitants of Quebec was soon to be known to the citizens of the United States and the subjects of King George.

When the long column had reached the great square before the Citadel and had taken the position previously assigned to them, a most interesting occurrence took place. One of the oldest and most influential French residents came forward and presented an address of welcome to the President-General. On behalf of his fellow citizens the aged Frenchman requested that the commander-in-chief of the American army would consent to meet the

## *THE HAND OF THE ASSASSIN*

French citizens on the steps of the Town Hall in order that they might profess their loyalty and allegiance to the new power which was to rule them in future. The President accepted the invitation and, accompanied by the members of his staff and a small body of cavalry, soon arrived at the place appointed for the reception.

The President took up his position upon the lower one of the long flight of steps which led to the Town Hall. Grouped about him were the members of his staff, while upon either side, sitting like statues upon their horses, were the members of the cavalry escort which had accompanied him.

For more than half an hour the long line of ladies and gentlemen who had come to pay their respects to the President-General filed by, each receiving a clasp of the hand, a smile, and an occasional word of recognition or compliment from the conqueror who was the hero of the day.

Suddenly, a man, after extending his right hand which had been grasped by the President, drew something from inside his coat with his left and made a quick lunge at the President. Being a man of powerful build, he retained in a firm grasp the right hand of the President and struck once more at his unprotected breast. The horrified members of his staff saw the glint of steel and instantly thereafter two streams of blood issuing from the breast of the President and trickling slowly down his uniform.

Capt. Abe Budlong who was in command of the cavalry escort took in the situation at a glance.



## THE CLIMAX

He leaped from his horse and rushed forward just in time to catch the President before he could fall, ere the members of the staff had so far recovered from their surprise at the unexpected deed as to render any assistance.

Then a hoarse cry of rage arose from the throats of all who had witnessed the terrible deed, accompanied by the cries and shrieks of the women many of whom sank fainting to the ground or were supported by the strong arms of their husbands, fathers, brothers or lovers. But a deadly vengeance was to be wreaked upon the perpetrator of the foul crime and the work was to be done by one fully competent for the task.

William P. Van Ness who had been appointed Secretary of War by President Burr at the beginning of his first term had also been made a general and accompanied Burr in all his victorious campaigns. He was a man of strong passions, vindictive nature, and great muscular strength.

As soon as the assassin realized that the two wounds that he had inflicted were probably not fatal he changed the dagger from his left to his right hand and prepared to give a more effective blow. At this moment, Van Ness grappled with him and bore him to the ground. Then a deadly combat took place during which Gen. Van Ness was cut severely in the cheek, the wound leaving in after years a long, livid scar. He also received a stab in the back which failed only to reach his heart through lack of strength in the assassin's arm. Van Ness's fury was so aroused by the conflict

## *THE HAND OF THE ASSASSIN*

that, despite the efforts of those who tried to drag him from his victim, he throttled him. When convinced that his enemy was dead, Van Ness, in the passion of the moment, stepped upon the prostrate form and with the blood streaming from his wounds, cried:

"Thus die all traitors! Long live President Burr, the Creator of America!"

Moved by a resistless impulse, Jean Verviers, who had been an interested spectator, rushed forward and looked down upon the dead man. Then with a loud shriek, in which pity and horror were commingled, fell senseless upon the prostrate body. Despite the blackened and distorted features she had recognized those of her husband—James Reynolds!

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE NURSE'S STORY.

**A**BE BUDLONG supported the stricken President in his powerful arms, Burr's slight form causing him no more physical inconvenience than if he had been an infant. The aged Frenchman who had extended the invitation to the President to honor them with a reception seemed to think that the whole blame for the occurrence rested upon his shoulders, for he approached the group gathered about the wounded man in a state of terrible agitation.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he cried. "I shall never forgive myself for this unfortunate affair. Bring him to my house at once, gentlemen, it is only a short distance from here. Send for your doctors at once. *Mon Dieu!* If he should die!" and the tears ran down his old and wrinkled cheeks.

Hardly a quarter of an hour elapsed before Burr was resting upon a luxurious bed in the old Frenchman's spacious and elegant mansion. Half a dozen army surgeons examined the wounds and declared in their opinion, that though serious they were not necessarily fatal. Announcements to this effect were sent to the commanders of each division of the army with directions to make the in-

## THE NURSE'S STORY

formation public to both soldiers and citizens. More couriers were dispatched to Washington and intermediate points with accounts of the affair and opinions as to its probable outcome.

When Stephanie saw the President fall and perceived the two streams of blood issuing from his wounds, she turned with a woman's natural sense of horror at such a sight to her cousin Henri from whose face every particle of color had fled. While the combat between Gen. Van Ness and the would-be assassin was going on, she buried her face upon her cousin's shoulder, while he, to support her, put his arm about her. Thus they stood, not knowing what to do or say, until the tragedy was ended. The loud shriek given by Jean Verviers brought Stephanie to herself and she then realized how her display of affection for her cousin might be interpreted by him. She withdrew quickly from his embrace and said in a constrained manner:

"They are taking him away; let us follow him."

When the surgeons came from the President's chamber, at Stephanie's request, Henri made inquiries as to his condition and both were greatly cheered by the hopeful news.

"He must have some one to nurse him. I am a good nurse. I have had much experience. I will offer my services."

These words were uttered impulsively and with that forgetfulness of self so characteristic of the sympathy of women.

"No," cried Henri; "you must not do that, Stephanie. You are the Countess d'Auxrois and

## THE CLIMAX

it is not proper that you should occupy the position of a nurse, even for a President-General."

There was a flash of anger in Stephanie's eye as she replied haughtily:

"I would do as much for one of his common soldiers, if he needed my care and there was no one else to nurse him."

"But there will be some one else," said Henri. "There will be plenty. I heard one of the surgeons say—'I will send a nurse at once.' She will come, no doubt, from some hospital and will understand her duties more thoroughly than you, even with your extended experience."

The closing words used by Henri were unfortunately selected and seemed to hide a touch of sarcasm. They were resented by Stephanie, but not in the manner that he might have expected.

"I bow to your commands, Henri, Marquis de Rolletaire," she said in clear-cut tones. "I hope when I give you a command that you will be equally obedient."

"You are not a nurse and I am not a hero," Henri replied, "but you cannot deny that I have done what you commanded me to do—nay, pardon, Cousin Stephanie, you did not command me—you but asked me."

Further argument was summarily ended by the entrance of the old Frenchman. Henri declared his name and rank and introduced his cousin.

"My! My!" cried the old man. "I met your father, the Marquis, when he was on his way to Montreal. He stopped in Quebec several days—

## THE NURSE'S STORY

and Mademoiselle—he told me the sad story of your family. Unhappy France! A king sits upon her throne now, but only God knows whether it is stable or insecure. May I beg of you to honor me by becoming my guests until you leave the city?”

The Marquis wished to decline the invitation but his would-be host would listen to no refusal and it was finally decided that they should remain for a day at least.

When she who had been known as Jean Verriers was lifted from the dead body of James Reynolds her frantic gestures and incoherent words led a bystander to remark:

“The boy is crazy! Better take him to the hospital. It is right over there,” and as he spoke he pointed out its location.

When Maria Reynolds awoke, she found herself in bed. Her boy's clothing had been removed—her secret must be known. The room was dark and, glancing towards the window, she saw that it was night.

“They must have given me something to make me sleep,” she said to herself, for she recalled the fact that it was only a short time after noon when she had fainted. Where was she? How should she explain her wearing of the boy's costume? What reason could she give for her being disguised?

The door was opened and a nurse entered, bearing a lighted candle in her hand, which she placed upon the table beside the bed.

“Ah! Mademoiselle, you are awake.”

## THE CLIMAX

Yes, her secret was known. The nurse knew that she was a woman.

"But, what—" the nurse began, and then stopped.

"I know what you would ask me," said Maria. "You have a right to know. The fact is, I ran away from Montreal in disguise to escape the importunities of an objectionable suitor. My father likes him, probably because he is wealthy, and insists upon my marrying him. The departure of the American army on its way to Quebec gave me an opportunity which I improved. I made up my mind to join it as a camp follower, but I was advised by a friend to put on a boy's costume and she helped me with my disguise. My father does not know where I am. If he did, he would come and take me home, and I would rather die than go back."

Maria told this story with such truthful earnestness that her listener believed every word of it. It was her turn now to become confidential.

"Is it not strange, Mademoiselle," said she, "that we are both in the same predicament? I do not mean that, for you have fled from your persecutor, while I see no way in which I can escape from mine."

The nurse saw the questioning look on Maria's face and continued:

"My father is very poor, he owes a man money. This man is not old, but he is a drunkard and a gambler. He tells my father that he loves me and would make me his wife. Yesterday he told father

## THE NURSE'S STORY

that if I did not marry him he should press his claim and put my father in jail. Oh! if I were rich!" she cried, wringing her hands.

"What would you call being rich?" asked Maria, for to her bright mind an idea had come which would offer opportunities for further diversion and enable her to more satisfactorily perform the duties set for her by her employer.

"If I had ten pounds," said Jacqueline Morenne, for that was the nurse's name, "father and I would leave Quebec and go to some other part of Canada. My father is a good man and would not force me to marry any one whom I did not love."

"Where is my boy's dress?" asked Maria.

"Here," said the nurse and, going to a closet, she brought out the garments. There was an inside pocket in the blouse and from it Maria took a little leathern bag.

"This shall be yours," said Maria, "upon one condition."

"Name it!" cried Jacqueline. "I will consent to anything that you may ask!"

By direction of the superintendent of the hospital of Notre Dame, the nurse, Jacqueline Morenne, was sent to wait upon the wounded President-General. After Burr's wounds had been dressed by the surgeons, a composing draught was given him and he had fallen asleep. When he awoke, the room was dark excepting for the glimmer thrown by a solitary candle. The light, however, was sufficient for him to see that a handsome young woman in



## THE CLIMAX

a nurse's costume was sitting at his bedside. He fixed his penetrating gaze upon her.

"What is your name, Mademoiselle?" he asked in French.

"Jacqueline Morenne," was the reply.

A man's perceptive powers are sharpened by pain and suffering. Burr carefully scrutinized the nurse—her hair, eyes, figure, and general manner; the tone of her voice—the poise of her head—the movement of her hands. Then he asked suddenly:

"Have I ever known you by any other name or names?"

"My God!" cried the woman. She sank upon her knees by the bedside and buried her face in her hands.

"I have seen you before," said Burr, calmly. "By what name were you known to me?"

"I will confess all," the woman moaned. "Who I am, why I am here, and who sent me. The man who tried to kill you to-day was my husband, James Reynolds. My real name is Maria Reynolds but I have been known to you as Thankful Macy and as Jean Verviers."

"A spy?" asked Burr, calmly.

"Yes," cried the woman. "A spy! sent to watch you by your deadliest enemy."

"I think I know to whom you refer," said Burr, quietly. "I know he must pay you well or you would not have followed me so far and have been so persistent. Let us understand each other, Mademoiselle. I will tell you a story about this deadliest enemy of mine, as you call him, and then

## THE NURSE'S STORY

you may decide whether you will serve him or me in the future."

"But you will tire yourself too much, sir, if you talk. The doctors will blame me—it will make you feverish. Wait until to-morrow."

"No," said Burr, "I am feeling quite well, only a little stiff and sore. I judge my injuries are only flesh wounds after all. Doctors always magnify a man's disease. They increase their importance, and the cures effected by them enhance their reputation. I have never had occasion to need their services before but, Jacqueline, give me a glass of water.

"This deadliest enemy of mine and myself were both young officers attached to the staff of Gen. George Washington, the commander of the American Army during the Revolution. On my way from Montreal to New York, I stopped at Albany. There my protection was claimed for a young lady who was desirous of reaching New York, where a relative resided. I saw her safely to the home of her aunt, an estimable Dutch widow. Mine enemy and myself both became visitors at this house; I, impelled by a feeling of friendship for the young lady. What his motives were, I leave you to divine after I have completed my story.

"One day I called at the house and learned to my astonishment that the young lady had gone into the country. Her aunt would not say where and there was a chilliness in her reception of me that made me feel sure that I was considered to be in some way connected with the affair. I insisted

## THE CLIMAX

that the aunt should tell me what had caused her niece's departure. Then she told me that rumors were rife in the city prejudicial to the good name of the young girl. 'Whose name is associated with hers?' I inquired. The old lady hesitated, and, upon my repeating the question, burst into tears. I demanded to know his name, and you may imagine my astonishment when she said, pointing her finger at me, 'They say you are the man.' Then I demanded to know why the aunt had allowed herself to believe such a story. She finally said, in justification, that her niece had confessed her love for me to her, and this fact, more than any other, had led her to give credence to the rumors which had reached her ears.

"Her aunt told me where her niece was living, and I went to her without delay. I explained to the young girl as delicately as I could that, although I looked upon her as a friend, I did not love her and the thought of making her my wife had never entered my mind. I was sorry to speak the words and sorrier still when I saw the effect that they produced upon her. The shock was more than she could stand, and her reason fled. Several months later I went to see her again. She had nearly recovered her mental balance and listened patiently and pleasantly to me. I had ascertained, at least to my own satisfaction, the source of the rumors and determined to remove her, having obtained her aunt's consent, to a place where she would be free from further persecution. I went with her as far as Elizabethtown. There we parted, and I have

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never seen or heard from her since. She told me that mine enemy had professed his love for her, but had said nothing about making her his wife. She had refused his proposal with the scorn it deserved. He had hated me as a rival, and now he hated her as a man always hates the woman whom he covets but cannot possess."

During the telling of the story, the nurse listened with breathless interest. She fixed her eyes upon Burr, catching every word that fell from his lips, all the while clasping and unclasping her hands, nervously. As he finished, she cried:

"You say you have never seen the young woman since?"

"Never," Burr repeated, "nor have I ever heard from her. I know not whether she is living or dead."

"I can complete your story," said the nurse. "She is living, and was again saved from dishonor by your hand."

"I do not understand you," Burr exclaimed. "I repeat, I have never seen the woman since I parted from her in Elizabethtown, to which place I accompanied her on her journey."

"Do you not remember," asked the woman, "being present in a little town when a married woman was abducted by two British soldiers? You followed them on a mule named 'Independence.' You overtook them, killed one, and the other fled. You gave the woman the mule to ride home upon and you took the horse."

## THE CLIMAX

"Yes," cried Burr. "But how did you know all this?"

"She told me. My maiden name was Maria Prentiss. The woman whom you rescued was my mother, and her maiden name was Adelaide Clifton."

To the majority of men in Burr's situation such an announcement would have given a nervous shock, and would have been followed by a period of feverish excitement decidedly prejudicial to the health of the sufferer. Burr turned his deep, penetrating eyes full upon the face of the young woman who still knelt beside the bed upon which he lay.

"Your mother was a very good woman. She bore her troubles meekly and patiently, as good women always do. I am glad that she married and had a daughter. I think you resemble her somewhat—in appearance. This is a small world after all, and perhaps it is not strange that the daughter of my good friend, Adelaide Clifton, should be in the service of my deadliest enemy."

The last words were not spoken in a sarcastic manner, but a smile played over Burr's features as he uttered them.

The strange story was true. The woman whom Hamilton had employed to spy upon the President was the daughter of the woman whose good name he had destroyed years before because of his jealousy and hatred of Aaron Burr.

"I wish you would call one of the doctors, Maria," said Burr. "The bandage on one of my wounds has slipped and needs replacing. I will

## THE NURSE'S STORY

“speak to him and have you sent back to the hospital. I will see that they give you a position as nurse.”

“No! No! No!” cried the woman, clasping her hands, and looking at him, piteously. “Don’t send me away from you. Let me serve you as I did when you knew me as Thankful Macy. I will be your slave, I will die for you. If they want my very heart’s blood to keep you alive they shall have it. It is no more than your due. Oh, my God!” she cried in tones of anguish. “I have been twice dishonored; once by the man whom I have served and once again by thus trying to bring discredit upon the man who was my mother’s truest and best friend. How can I ever atone for what I have done? Do let me stay with you.”

“You may stay,” said Burr, quietly. “Now please go for the doctor, for my wound is becoming painful.”

The bandage was replaced and another sleeping potion administered. Maria sat in a dark corner of the room, her gaze fixed upon her new master, whose eyes were closed and who seemed to be asleep.

There came a light knock at the door. Maria moved quickly but quietly, and opened it.

“I am commissioned by the Countess d’Auxrois,” said the Marquis de Rolletaire, “to present these flowers to His Excellency, the President-General. Please present them with our mutual regrets and sympathies.”

Maria closed the door softly, and, tip-toeing

## *THE CLIMAX*

across the room, placed the large bunch of fragrant roses upon the table by the bedside. They were in a beautiful vase of antique pattern, which, no doubt, had been supplied by the master of the house.

The subtle aroma of the flowers must have reached him, for he opened his eyes and looked at them. Maria had retreated to her dark corner and was invisible to him.

Seeing that he was awake, Maria spoke from out of the gloom :

"Those flowers were brought to you by the young French Marquis. They are from his cousin, the Countess, and he wished me to express their sympathy."

For a moment Burr inhaled their fragrance; then he closed his eyes once more as if to sleep. The boon did come to him, but his slumbers were fitful and filled with fantastic dreams. In one of them, he imagined that the bunch of roses grew rapidly, both upward and downward, then it began to assume the shape of a human figure—that of a woman. The beautiful flowers in turn became transformed into a beautiful face, and the face was that of Stephanie—Countess d'Auxrois.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### A GREAT RENUNCIATION.

THE President was soon pronounced out of danger by the attending surgeons. His wounds began to heal and his convalescence promised to be rapid. Although not obliged to stay in bed, he was confined within the four walls of his room, for the surgeons had warned him that too much physical exercise might lead to a re-opening of the wound.

Maria Reynolds, who was still called by her assumed name, Jacqueline, had been untiring in her efforts to add to the comfort of her patient. Despite her past troubles and the unhappy life which she had led, her natural good nature now gained the ascendancy. Burr said, one day:

"I am sorry that I am getting well so fast, Jacqueline."

"Why?" asked the woman, looking astonished.

"I shall miss your kind ministrations, your pleasing voice, and bright smile."

"I have thought many times," said Maria, "that perhaps I worried you by seeming so happy when you were sick and suffering from pain, but since you told me that I can go back with you to Washington and live with your beautiful daughter and



## THE CLIMAX

your grandson, whom I love so much, I am happy. I can hardly wait for the day to come."

"Your presence will be a great comfort to Theodosia," was the reply. "She has lost her husband, and must be very lonely, poor girl. It will be our duty to make her as happy as possible. Do you know, Jacqueline," he added, "I am looking forward to something, too."

"To meeting your daughter and grandson?" said the woman, interrogatively.

"To that, surely, but I have another pleasure in view. If your mother, Adelaide Clifton—Mrs. Adelaide Prentiss, I mean—is still living, I shall be most happy to renew our former pleasant acquaintance. Did she ever tell you how near we came to being eaten up by bears?"

"Many a time," said the woman, with a laugh. "Like all little girls, I used to have my unhappy moments. It was then that she told me the story of the bears and how she owed her life to you, but she never told me your name."

As soon as the President was able to receive visitors, the members of his staff, accompanied by their wives, called upon him. Flowers and delicacies of all sorts were sent to his chamber in profusion. The ladies of the party offered to come and read to him, sing to him, or converse with him, and, during the last two weeks of his convalescence, his room had a marked resemblance to a French *salon*.

It was natural that Stephanie should have part of the time allotted to her, during which she was in

## *A GREAT RENUNCIATION*

attendance upon the President-General. While she was with him he made every endeavor to appear at his best; thus stimulated, her wit, vivacity, and sharpness of intellect were made plainly apparent to Burr, who studied her intently. When he was alone, he gave himself up to reflection, and the Countess Stephanie became the subject of almost constant thought.

"I shall soon be able to return to Washington," he said to her one day. "I hope that you will do me the honor to accompany our party to the capital city of America, and take part in the festivities which are sure to follow our return."

"I shall be delighted to do so," said Stephanie. "I do not believe in war on slight pretexts; but when conducted for a grand purpose, as you have carried on this conflict, in order to create a great empire for your people and their descendants, then the blood and treasure seem well expended. But to me, the noblest part of all wars is the treaty of peace which closes them and the rejoicings of the victors, if the victory is for the good of mankind."

"I wish, my dear Countess, that I could so impress your words upon my memory that I should never forget them. Within the compass of one short sentence, you have expressed what many historians have tried to say in a volume, and have failed."

"Your Excellency flatters me," said the Countess, and a slight shade of vexation passed over her face. "You know I do not like flattery,

## THE CLIMAX

and it is inapplicable to one who is of so little importance in the world as I am."

"I beg pardon for the inadvertency of my speech," said Burr. "But I must protest against the estimate which you place upon yourself. If you will not allow me to flatter you by saying what I deem your due, I really cannot allow you to utter words of self-depreciation. If you persist, I shall speak to the Marquis de Rolletaire."

It was not a look of simple vexation, but one of deep displeasure, which now showed itself upon the face of the Countess.

"The Marquis de Rolletaire," she said, coldly, "has certain claims upon me because of our blood relationship, but I am not aware that his control over me extends beyond the narrow bounds due to a mere cousinship." She arose, while speaking, and, with the step of a queen, moved proudly toward the door.

"I will extend your kind invitation to visit Washington to my cousin, the Marquis, and perhaps he will insist upon my accepting the same."

As she disappeared from view, Burr ejaculated:

"She is a rare woman, and the man who secures her love will be more than honored by it."

When he first met Stephanie, he had thought her the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. When she had taken his order during the battle and had carried it to the farthestmost part of the field, escaping injury, although exposed to the steady fire of the enemy, he knew that she possessed heroic qualities rarely found in woman. Her

## *A GREAT RENUNCIATION*

ministrations at his bedside convinced him that, although proud and brave, she was as tender of heart as though the two former qualities had not entered into her composition.

Why should he not ask her to become his wife? His daughter Theodosia was a widow with a child dependent upon her, and his first duty was to them. He knew that she had often neglected her duty to her husband, although with his consent, to be with him. Of course, this was selfish on his part, but, loving his daughter as he did and her love for him being of even greater strength than his own for her, the very selfishness of their love seemed to give it an added charm.

Next, he thought of his own personal position. He was the President of a great and rapidly-growing country. Problems of state would require all the time and attention he could give them until the close of his administration. Although strongly supported by the majority of the citizens of the country, there was, as there always is, a disaffected minority. The party of negation is always marked by its strength and cohesiveness, for it has everything to gain. The predominant party is likely to be divided into contending factions which take the opportunity to test their individual strength, feeling that the party as a whole is secure in power.

Then, there was another reason which concerned Stephanie much more than it did him. He wished to offer her his love and protection. She was sure of the first, but could he give her the latter in the full degree which he felt was her due?

## THE CLIMAX

He thought of her birth, of her long line of kingly ancestors, and of her great pride in her aristocratic associations. If he made her his wife, and she became the mistress of the White House, what would be the result? Probably the members of his own party who sympathized strongly with the French would applaud his action. But the pro-British minority would make her a target for their abusive remarks. He imagined the editor of a certain newspaper saying:

"This act of the President confirms our worst suspicions. Although posing as a representative of pure Democracy, he, like all men who become possessed of great power, is a monarchist at heart. We believe that Alexander Hamilton's idea of a limited monarchy for America was, and is, the correct one. But we do not believe that if Alexander Hamilton stood where President Burr does that he would take to wife a member of the French aristocracy, whose exactions from the poor brought on the bloody 'Reign of Terror.' No, if he made such an alliance he would unite himself to one of our kindred—one bound to us by the ties of a common blood, a common language, and, we believe, a common destiny."

Burr felt that happiness might come to him, but the time was not yet. He must wait and speak no word. But when he realized that this was the most honorable course for him to pursue, it seemed a thousand times harder to follow than he had at first anticipated. Every element of her beauty—of her grace—of her wit—of her all-engaging personality

## *A GREAT RENUNCIATION*

spoke strongly in her favor. It was true, she might reject his suit, but yet he felt in his heart that if he spoke the word he could win her.

The day following Burr's interview with the Countess, in which he knew that he had twice unintentionally offended her, he had a visitor in the person of Henri, Marquis de Rolletaire.

"My cousin, the Countess," said the young man, "has extended to me your kind invitation to accompany your official party to Washington and be present at the reception which your grateful countrymen will, no doubt, accord you. But I fear that our acceptance of your invitation will be impossible."

"I regret to hear this, Marquis," said the President. "I had hoped that all those who had taken part in our campaign would accompany me to receive their share of the laurels of victory."

"One poor little leaf is all to which I can lay claim, I fear," said the Marquis, with a laugh. "No doubt, the Countess, my cousin, would be entitled to a greater reward."

"If she is only present," said Burr, "I will see that her crown is complete. But what dire necessity compels you to refuse my invitation?"

"It is this," said the Marquis. "This morning I received letters from France, which were forwarded to me from Montreal, containing some very pleasant intelligence for both my cousin and myself. The restoration of Louis XVIII. to the throne of his fathers has opened the way for both of us to return to France. The damages inflicted

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upon the estates of the aristocrats are to be made good by disbursements from the national treasury.

"I have told my cousin, the Countess, of our good fortune, and, of course, it will be absolutely necessary for her to go back to France with me. We cannot defer our departure, for she is the sole heiress of a large and very valuable estate, and her immediate presence will be necessary in order that the reimbursements to be made by the government may be paid to her in person. Besides, she will naturally wish to restore her father's castle, which was very nearly destroyed during the Reign of Terror."

"Under the circumstances," said Burr, "I see that any insistence upon your acceptance of my invitation would be unjust to you and to your cousin, the Countess. I regret very much, Marquis, your inability to be present on what I know will be a very interesting occasion. I will express my regrets to your cousin, the Countess, when I next have the pleasure of seeing her."

Burr now realized that one of two courses must be followed. He must either declare his love to Stephanie and win her promise to be his wife before she returned to France, or maintain silence and leave the future to decide their fate.

By the time that Henri and Stephanie had returned to Montreal and made a proper disposition of the former's property there and once more reached Quebec, Burr had entirely recovered and was ready to return to Washington. Commissioners for negotiating a treaty of peace had been

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appointed by him, and they were on their way to Warsaw, where the treaty was to be drawn up and signed.

Gen. Andrew Jackson was made Governor-in-Chief of Canada, while military governors were appointed for each division of the conquered country. It was decided by the surgeons that the President-General was not in a fit condition to undertake so long a journey on horseback or in a more uncomfortable article of conveyance—a coach. So the President gave orders to Commodore Decatur to send one of the fastest gunboats to Halifax with instructions that a warship should be sent to the mouth of the St. Lawrence. When on board, the President's intention was to proceed to Halifax and then, accompanied by a large part of the American fleet, proceed to the capital city by water.

A man condemned to death clings to life and takes advantage of every opportunity to extend his hours upon earth; so, too, a lover clings to the presence of the woman who has won his affections and uses every artifice, and even descends to subterfuge, to keep her near him. An idea occurred to Burr, and he was not slow in putting it into execution. He sent an aide and requested a short interview with the Marquis de Rolletaire.

"My dear Marquis," said he, when the young man appeared, "for good and sufficient reasons you have found it necessary to decline to accept my invitation to accompany me to Washington. These reasons will not apply as regards another



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invitation which I am going to extend to you, and which I hope you and your cousin, the Countess, will find it impossible to refuse."

"We shall both be pleased, your Excellency, to defer in any way that we possibly can to your wishes."

"You are to return to France and wish to reach that country as soon as possible, and it is in my power, though you will understand against my inclination, to both hasten your departure and your arrival."

"Under the circumstances, considering your determination, such an act upon your part will be no exception to that nobleness of character which you have so often manifested," said the Marquis, politely.

"My plan is this," Burr went on. "I am to take passage to the mouth of the St. Lawrence on one of Commodore Decatur's gunboats, which is now being made ready for the trip. When I arrive there, a warship will be in readiness. We shall then proceed to Halifax. From that port I shall despatch several warships, carrying envoys, who will bear to foreign capitals the intelligence of our victory and the meeting of the Peace Congress at Warsaw. Will you and your cousin, the Countess, to please me, kindly accept passage on a vessel whose destination will be the city of Havre in your own country?"

"Your Excellency," the Marquis replied, "in return for our apparent lack of interest you overwhelm us with kindness and place us both under



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lasting obligations. I accept your invitation with gratitude, and I know that my cousin, the Countess, will be equally grateful."

When the gunboats reached the mouth of the St. Lawrence, the warship was in readiness. One night, as Henri stood with Stephanie on the deck, he referred again to the subject which was always uppermost in his mind.

"Do you remember, Stephanie," he asked, "that when I made my promise that I would accept a position on Gen. Burr's staff, you gave me just a gleam of hope that if I did so you would perhaps look with more favor upon the suit which I have so often pressed and always, I may add, so unsuccessfully?"

"Do not speak of it to-night," Stephanie answered, and there was a tone of weariness in her voice. "Wait until we get back to France and resume our old life—a life which we ought never to have been forced to leave," she added, bitterly. "I will not promise, Henri, but, perhaps, then,—"

When the warship reached Halifax, the President-General and his suite, accompanied by the Marquis de Rolletaire and the Countess d'Auxrois, took up their residence in the Governor's palace.

For several days, the President was busily engaged in preparing the official documents which were to be carried by special envoys to the sovereigns of foreign countries. That intended for the King of France was ready, the envoy had been appointed and the ship awaited an order to sail. No matter how many respites the doomed criminal

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secures, the day of execution comes at last. To Burr, the parting with Stephanie seemed the same as giving up his life.

Burr had made up his mind to what was, for him, an act of great renunciation. Never, in the course of his life, had he yearned for anything as for the love and company of Stephanie—and yet, circumstances kept him from speaking the words which would have, undoubtedly, made her his own.

The parting between them was a most trying one for both. Burr had divined Stephanie's feelings correctly. She had seen no man whom she loved as she did this hero. She may have thought that he would ask her to become his wife, but if such a thought entered her mind no indication of it could have been observed in her voice, or from a contemplation of her beautiful and expressive face.

What a power it is that is given to man and woman to hide their most sacred thoughts behind a mask—to speak lightly and smile sweetly, when, within, the heart is torn with the throes of strong passion.

When Stephanie left the room, it seemed to her as though she would rather sink beneath the waters of the Atlantic and know that her troubles were over forever, than to return to France carrying with her the prospect of a fate which she knew she could not escape. Burr, as he gazed at her retreating figure, felt that the brightest, happiest, and most joyous event of his life would have been his marriage with this woman, from whom, by the force of circumstances, he was compelled to part.



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Yet, when she had placed her hand in his for the last time, the *adieu* of each had been spoken with a studied reserve and the usual conventional politeness, while the voices of each, repressed in order not to betray emotion, were almost cold in tone.

When she had gone, Burr walked excitedly up and down the room. "I am a coward," he said to himself. "Any man is base who places personal ambition above the love of a woman like her; but it is not for my ambition that I do this, but to save her from abuse and censure. This is the only justification which condones my judgment, but it does not satisfy the promptings of my heart."

He walked to the window and looked out. The Marquis de Rolletaire, with uncovered head, was handing his cousin, the Countess d'Auxrois, into her carriage. He saw the footman close the carriage door, heard the crack of the coachman's whip, the rattle of the horses' hoofs—and the dream of his life was over! As he turned from the window, in the anguish of his heart, he cried:

"For her sake I could become an exile, but not now—not now!"

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CÆSAR OR CATILINE?

THE greatest day of rejoicing that the citizens of the United States had ever known was at hand. On the morrow, those members of the victorious American army which had conquered Canada who were not on garrison duty in that country, were to enter the capital city, led by the President-General, the members of his staff and those officers who had commanded the various divisions of the army. To this grand array were added detachments of sailors and marines from the war vessels lying in the Potomac River, under command of the great naval hero of the war, Stephen Decatur. This vast array was to march up Pennsylvania Avenue to the great area in front of the Capitol. The public buildings and the houses of the citizens were decorated with bunting and flags, while from every flagpole in the city the Stars and Stripes were flung to the breeze. The bells were rung and salutes were fired by the vessels in the river and by artillery located in different parts of the city.

The streets through which the procession passed were thronged with spectators, and cheers and shouts greeted each well-known face as it came in

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view. Every regiment had its particular friends, and they vied with each other in demonstrations of applause and enthusiasm.

It had been arranged that when the head of the procession reached the Capitol grounds, the President, accompanied by the members of the Cabinet, his staff, and a committee of Senators and Representatives and prominent citizens from all parts of the country, should ascend the great flight of steps leading to the Rotunda, where a reception was to be given to those desirous of being presented to the President-General.

Secretary of War Van Ness, who had been present at that reception in Quebec which came so near to having an awful conclusion, was strongly opposed to the proposed reception.

"Your Excellency," said he, "every one knows that you are a brave man and not afraid to die, even by the hand of an assassin; but you must remember that while you are the President of this great country you do not belong to yourself, but to the people who have chosen you for their ruler. All who will assemble to take you by the hand may be your friends. You thought they were at Quebec, but there was one who was not. Here, at home, there are likely to be many who are not."

"Do you not know," was Burr's reply, "that to make an innovation upon long-established practice is much more dangerous than to expose one's life? You say everybody knows that I am brave. If I give up this reception, there are those who will say he was brave once, but, since that affair at

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Quebec, he has lost his nerve. No, Van Ness, whatever the risk is, whatever the danger is, I must face it. If I fall, I will fall as Cæsar did."

From his long acquaintance with Burr, Van Ness knew that it was useless to argue longer from the point of view which he had first taken. If he were to influence the President at all, it must be by some other form of argument. The evening before the great celebration, he called at the White House and asked for a short private interview with the President, which was accorded him.

"Van Ness, I am glad to see that you look more hopeful," said the President. "I trust you have dismissed your fears in regard to my safety. I know that they were prompted by your regard for me, and I respect both you and them."

"Your Excellency," said Van Ness, "I have a plan which, if it meets with your approval, will not oblige you to make an innovation on old-established custom, and yet will, I think, guarantee that safety which I so much desire to secure for your person. Will you listen to it?"

"With pleasure," the President replied.

"My plan is this," Van Ness began. "We will suppose you and your staff located at the farther end of the Rotunda. All doors will be closed and locked with the exception of the ones through which those to be presented enter and depart. In the centre of the Rotunda, I would place a guard of twenty soldiers, or marines, fully armed, in two lines, standing back to back. At the end nearest you the two guards should face you. As those

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wishing to be presented enter, as instructed beforehand, they will clasp their hands chest high, as a sign of friendship, and keep them in that position in full sight of the guards, until they reach you. Each one will then place the left hand upon the heart as a sign of loyalty and extend the right hand to meet yours. After this recognition, they will move on, clasping their hands again in the position indicative of friendship and keep them there until they have passed beyond the line of guards."

The President sat for a few moments without speaking. Then he looked up with a grave smile on his face.

"My dear Van Ness, that is a very pretty conceit of yours. It sounds well when spoken and it would read well when printed, but I am much afraid that it would not work so well in actual practice. I, however, see one good idea in the plan suggested, which I am disposed to adopt. I must object to cavalrymen, infantrymen, or artillerymen. I am also opposed to soldiers and marines for the proposed guard. The army had all the honors at Quebec. Let some of it fall this time to the navy and the younger members of it. If you will see Commodore Decatur and provide that a guard of twenty young and good-looking midshipmen is selected, I will agree to their occupying the position of which you speak. They could wear their swords, which will be sufficient, I think, for all purposes of offense or defense. Their presence will also produce another excellent result. It will divide the incoming and outgoing throng in such a way



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that they will not interfere with or hinder each other."

After Sec. Van Ness's departure, the President had intended to retire to rest in order to prepare for the arduous to-morrow. But word was brought him that another visitor desired an audience. It was Capt. Abiel Budlong, and the President gave instructions that he should be admitted.

"Well, Aaron," cried Abe, as he grasped the President's hand, "we came out on top arter all, didn't we? That was a nasty jab that that feller gave you in Quebec; but man never met with a righteous judgment quicker'n he did. D'yer know who he was?"

"Oh, yes," the President replied. "I know who he was and all about him, but the information I possess will go no farther."

"That's the way yer used to talk to me, Aaron, when we was young fellers together down in Litchfield, when you thought I'd asked 'nuf questions. I've not forgotten that when you talk that way it's time fer me to stop. Of course, there's goin' to be a big time to-morrow."

"I expect so," was the reply.

"I s'pose I git an invite?" said Abe.

"Certainly."

"And that invite includes the whole family, I s'pose? Phoebe's on here with me."

"I should be pleased to see her," said the President. "By all means, bring your wife with you."

The arrangements for the great gala day which, as an occasion of national festivity, eclipsed any

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Fourth of July which had preceded it, had been carried out to the letter, and the President, surrounded by his staff and the great men of the land, stood in the vast Rotunda of the Capitol giving audience to the citizens who desired to greet him personally and extend their congratulations.

Suddenly, there was a slight commotion, followed by suppressed laughter and the eyes of many were turned in the direction of the oncoming line. Surely, this was a democratic reception; for there, evidently, was a father leading a little boy by each hand, while behind him was a young and pretty woman, presumably his wife, carrying a girl baby in her arms.

"Aaron, this is Phoebe," said Abe.

That model of courtesy, the President, greeted the young woman with more than his usual politeness.

"And who is this little girl?" he asked, pinching the rosy cheek of the babe that lay asleep in its mother's arms.

"That's Theodosia Budlong," said Abe. "We thought over a name for a long time, but we decided on taking your darter's."

"And these young gentlemen?" the President asked.

"Well, this tall one," said Abe, "is Abiel Budlong, Junior, but that little feller we named arter you—he's Aaron Burr Budlong. He ain't so big as t'other one, but he's a good deal smarter; of course, that's on account of his name. My father-in-law, Solomon Priestley, you remember him

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when he was a boy—you know he wouldn't come with us when we was off for Cambridge to jine Washington—well, he wanted me ter name this little feller arter him, but I sot my foot down on that. An old Sol was enough for our fam'ly, without havin' a young one—'specially if there's any danger of his takin' arter the old one."

The day was closed by a grand ball and a great display of fireworks. The most beautiful ladies of the land vied with each other in their efforts to secure an opportunity to dance the minuet in the President's set, and many a bright eye grew brighter and many a rosy cheek took on a deeper shade of color at the graceful compliments which fell from the lips of the President. That night he won as decided a victory in the ball room as had been any won on the field of battle.

Theodosia and her son had viewed the procession from a window, but she had not felt equal to attending the reception at the Capitol, or the ball in the evening. She idolized her father and her heart was filled with pride as she thought of the great renown which he had won, but how could she be present at these festivities when the man whom she had loved, the father of her boy, lay beneath the sod in far-off Canada?

As she sat in her room that evening, she fancied she could hear the wail of the winds as they moved the branches and leaves of the great trees which formed his monument. Her heart bounded with delight when she thought of the glory which her father's deeds had secured him; but that same

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heart stood almost still when she thought of that dead hero whose bravery had led him to a soldier's grave.

Young Aaron had gone to bed long before the President returned. Theodosia did not retire; she sat through the long hours of the night thinking of father and husband and son. As the first gray streaks of morning stole into the room, she heard the sound of an approaching coach. A few moments later she was clasped in her father's arms. It had been arranged that they should not return to the White House until the festivities were over, and, as the public had been invited to inspect the war vessels in the river that morning and to witness a sham fight in the afternoon, Theodosia had another day for rest before entering the Executive Mansion to assume her former duties as mistress.

A week passed, after his return to his official duties, before the President and his advisers had disposed of the more important matters of public import which required their attention. One morning, at the close of a Cabinet meeting, Theodosia brought him a newspaper and called his attention to an article therein. It was a copy of the *Weekly Ribald*, published in Boston. Theodosia sat watching him as he read:

"Is it not time for those who profess to be Democrats, or who rejoice in the name of Republican, to find out whether the idol to whom they have bowed down and whom they have worshiped, has not recanted and fallen away from his former belief?

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"We are led to make these remarks from our knowledge of a fact which has come into our possession. We are informed, on what we deem the most credible authority, that when the American army entered Montreal the President did not, as might have been expected, make his headquarters in some one of the public buildings. Instead of doing what might have been expected, he accepted an invitation from two scions of the French nobility to become their guest, and for several days remained domiciled in these luxurious quarters, leaving the control of the army to a subordinate, and losing valuable time which, no doubt, was improved by the British commander at Quebec in strengthening his fortifications. The great loss of life among the Americans in the assault on Quebec is, no doubt, due, in no small degree, to this dilatoriness on the part of the Commander-in-Chief. This instance, slight in itself, speaks volumes. We think it reasonable and proper to ask whether the affections of the Chief Magistrate are not being slowly turned from the lovers of liberty to the exponents of legitimate monarchy."

As the President threw down the paper, he turned to his daughter and said:

"I was right, Theodosia. It was hard—very hard, to part from her, loving her as I did, but I was right!"

A look of surprise, followed by one of deep inquiry, showed themselves on Theodosia's face.

"Ah, my dear," said the President, "I have not told you of this. It is true that I did make my

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headquarters in the mansion of the Marquis de Rolletaire. I did this because I was anxious to meet an old friend, who had accompanied me forty years before, when Gen. Arnold sent me from Quebec to Gen. Montgomery at Montreal. I learned that my old guide, Louis Demarais, was a servant in the Rolletaire household."

"But who is she?" asked Theodosia.

"The cousin of the Marquis, Stephanie, Countess d'Auxrois. I fell in love with her, for she is the most beautiful woman I have ever met. But the dream is over. I parted from her at Halifax, and she has sailed for France in company with her cousin, who is also in love with her. I shall probably never see her again, but I shall never forget her, nor cease to love her."

"It seems, father," said Theodosia, "as if God intended that our fates should be unlike and yet similar. Through your life, you will never think of a living love, while I have only a dead one."

Her feelings overcame her, and she arose and hurriedly left the room.

Then Burr communed with himself.

"After all, it has turned out just as I expected. How the hue and cry would have been taken up and sent through the land had I allowed my heart to speak—had I asked the woman I loved to become my wife. No, before we parted I realized that such a union was impossible. Now that she has gone, I see that such a marriage would have been political suicide for me, and would have brought unhappiness to both of us."

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He took up the paper and glanced at it again. "I suppose that Jean Verviers sent word from Montreal to her employer and this article is the result. While I have forgiven her, I wonder if he will forgive her when he knows all."

While the representatives of the United States and Great Britain were in session at Warsaw, drawing up the articles of a treaty, the President and his Cabinet had protracted sessions, each day of which was devoted to the consideration of a most important matter which had been suggested by the chief executive. At one of the Cabinet meetings, he had said:

"Gentlemen, it is useless to disguise the truth. Since the days when the sons of Ham were driven out into the wilderness to care for themselves, the white man and the black man have never been able to live together on terms of social equality. We have, to a certain extent, ameliorated the condition of affairs, by transplanting the negro from the main land of the Continent to Mexico, Central America, and the islands of the West Indies. But we still govern them, because we are white, and they are black. We accord them territorial representatives; those representatives may speak, but they have no vote. We shrink from elevating these territories inhabited by the black man to the dignity of statehood. We shrink from receiving these black Senators and Representatives on terms of political equality through the fear that they will yearn for and endeavor to secure social equality. This, you know, as well as I do, the great body of the people

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will never accord them. Now, gentlemen, this whole situation is one of rank injustice to the black race. Our treatment of them is contrary to the spirit of our Constitution."

One after another, the members of the Cabinet expressed their views upon the question under discussion, but all agreed that there seemed to be no practical solution of the difficulty—no plan which would remove the evident injustice and give the black man an opportunity for the development which he craved. Then the President spoke again:

"Now, gentlemen, I have provoked this discussion. Of course, I have thought that perhaps some one of you had in mind a solution of this great question which might be better than the one which I now propose to present for your consideration. Let us try a grand experiment. Let us make a practical exemplification of that love of liberty and justice which was voiced in the Declaration of Independence and which is the underlying spirit of our Constitution. Let us prepare a Constitution, similar in import, but suited to the special wants of the black race. Let us give to them Mexico, Central America, and the islands of the West Indies for their own, in perpetuity. In other words, let us form an African United States of America!

"Their great men may be great among themselves, but our great men and their supporters will never accept them as equals. Besides, if a black man were accepted as an *égal* by white men, the men of his own race would think he had proved



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recreant to his own blood in order to curry favor with the whites."

Looks of astonishment showed themselves on the faces of every one of his auditors. Some pushed back their chairs from the great table, while others sprang to their feet.

"I have surprised you, gentlemen. The annunciation of a great truth is sure to surprise those who have no thought of it. Our meeting is closed for the day. We will meet again to-morrow, when I shall be pleased to listen to your opinions regarding the proposition that I have made."

Great truths do not need great defenders. They move forward to success impelled by their own greatness. So it was with the President's proposition. Its intent soon became known throughout the land. It was discussed in the newspapers, at public meetings, and even referred to from the pulpit. As public opinion crystallized, it soon became evident that the men who had made Aaron Burr President, were willing to adopt the plan proposed by Aaron Burr, the friend of humanity.

The proposed Constitution was drawn up and submitted to the States for their approval or rejection. It was approved.

The cities of Havana and Mexico were designated as capitals. Special commissioners from the United States, assisted by the army and navy, superintended the inauguration of the new government. There was but one provision in the new Constitution which contained any reference to the United States of America. It was provided that

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the new states should make no treaty or enter into any alliance with foreign powers in either hemisphere, unless it was first approved by the Congress and President of the United States.

The military and political victories of Aaron Burr and his adherents had proved too much for the Federalists and their former great leader, Alexander Hamilton. The Republicans waxed so powerful in influence that the Federalists became as a mere handful when compared with their political opponents; but there was one stronghold of Federalism still left, and, after consulting with his followers, Alexander Hamilton decided to leave New York and remove to Boston.

From this place, he carried on a puny warfare against the victorious adversary. By the treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain all of Canada and all of the British possessions in North America became part of the American domain. The monarchical spirit in America, of which Alexander Hamilton had been the great exponent, had received its first defeat when Aaron Burr became Governor of New York. The treaty of Warsaw gave that spirit its death blow, and its defenders found themselves without followers, and without an issue. They must seek new grounds of complaint. They found them, and to them gave the name—Imperialism.

Burr's second term was now drawing to a close. He had held the office of President longer than any previous incumbent, for his first term of four years had been followed by a second term of eight.

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His political and military friends were anxious that he should take the reins of power for a third term, but, in order to do this, the Constitution, which provided for but one term for the President, would have to be set aside, or amended. His political friends argued that his services to the country had been so unexampled that an exception should be made in his case.

Only a few months were to elapse before the nomination of candidates would become necessary, and Burr had not spoken either to his friends, or in reply to those who had called him Cæsar or Catiline, or accused him of imperial ambition. But his opponent was not idle. From his stronghold in Boston, where he was surrounded by the firmest adherents to the old Federalist cause, he sent forth numberless pamphlets signed with the names of dead and gone Greeks and Romans. It seems strange to us in these days how much stronger a pamphlet was one hundred years ago when signed Diodorus or Heliogabalus than it would have been if signed with the initials "A. H." or the full name "Alexander Hamilton."

Burr's chief opponent did not limit his attacks to pamphlets and articles in the newspapers. To all parts of the country he sent letters, invariably marked "Private" or "Confidential," the object of which was to stir up as much as possible opposition to the re-election of Aaron Burr to the Presidency. He presumably took it for granted that a man of Burr's ambition would not scruple to override the Constitution and make himself a military dictator.

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Throughout the country, the general sentiment was in favor of Burr, but in Massachusetts the ardent and persistent work done by Hamilton had raised the public feeling to white heat, and the prominent men of the state were outspoken against any extension of Burr's term of office. It was finally arranged that a great mass meeting should be held in Boston, which the principal opponents of Burr throughout the country should be invited to attend.

A day was fixed upon and the crystallized anti-Burr sentiment was to find expression in this monster gathering.

The astonishment of the Federalists it would be hard to imagine when the announcement came from Washington that the Hon. W. P. Van Ness, Secretary of War, would arrive in Boston on the day preceding the great mass meeting. What could this visit mean? Did it portend that the Secretary of War came at the direction of the President to call out the troops and suppress free speech in the state where the first blood of the Revolution had been shed? There were some fanatics who went so far as to declare that if Sec. Van Ness came with any such intention that his life would be forfeited.

One circumstance tended to allay the public feeling. There was only a small garrison of United States soldiers in the harbor, and there were no troops near enough to Boston to reach there in time to prevent the meeting. But the opponents of Burr took occasion to fan public sentiment to a

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whiter heat than ever, without going too much into the facts of the situation.

Sec. Van Ness arrived, as had been announced. He sent a communication, soon after he reached the town, to the chairman of the proposed mass meeting. In his letter he said that he came with the most peaceful intentions. He had no idea of interfering with free speech, and he simply asked the projectors of the meeting to permit him to address the large assemblage which would be likely to gather. His letter was couched in such a manner that the chairman could not refuse the request. When it was known that the most determined opponent of Aaron Burr, and his greatest friend and admirer, would speak from the same hustings, the interest and excitement, if possible, were increased.

Men and women, old and young, wended their way to the meeting-place. The anti-Burr speakers met in secret conclave and discussed the situation. Alexander Hamilton made the closing speech.

"Do not be cowed," he cried, "by this representative of military despotism. Do not abate one jot or tittle of what you had intended to say. When the time comes for me to speak, I will endorse all that you have said. When I close, I shall repeat those heroic words of Patrick Henry: 'If that be treason, make the most of it!' And this military hireling may carry back my words to his despotic master."



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### WHAT MANNER OF MEN THESE PURITANS WERE.

EVERY manner of invective, diatribe, aspersion, or accusation that could be invented was hurled at Aaron Burr from the crowded platform and loudly applauded by the majority of the great assemblage.

Alexander Hamilton had not at first intended to address the meeting. He had only agreed to do so after it became known that Gen. Van Ness was to speak. His ability as an orator was known and fully recognized, and the spirits of some of Hamilton's followers fell when they learned that they were to meet so redoubtable a champion on the hustings. But their spirits rose again when their leader promised to take the platform after Van Ness had concluded his speech. Hamilton had engineered the affair. He had selected the speakers. He had advised them in regard to the subject of their speeches, so that the full ground would be covered. He had selected the letters which were to be read upon the occasion, but he sat so quietly upon the platform, with that benign expression resting upon his face, that no one would have thought, to look at him, that this great meeting had been suggested, worked up, and brought to

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its present grand culmination mainly through his individual efforts.

But now came the time when Sec. Van Ness was granted half an hour in which to address the meeting. No one knew what subject he was to take, but the natural impression was that he would defend his friend, the President, from the attacks made upon him.

In this, they were mistaken.

"I shall take for the subject of my remarks," said Mr. Van Ness, "one in which you cannot fail to be interested. If you are not all descendants of the Puritans, you are, at least, acquainted with their history, and what I am going to say to you will only serve to revive memories of facts with which you have, of course, been long acquainted. Those of you who are not descendants of the Puritans, show, by being citizens of this state, that you are admirers of the Commonwealth founded by them. Now I am going to talk with you as I would with a friend, and consider what manner of men these Puritans were.

"Of course, you know as well as I do that the first Puritans who came here were called the Pilgrims. We have all been taught to love and revere them. They were godly men; they fled from persecution to make a home where they might worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. From the lives of such men we should expect to learn nothing but examples and precepts which all should imitate. But, looking over the records, we find some events which we cannot

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understand when taken in connection with the avowed purpose for which the colony was founded.

"For instance, we find that Peregrine White, one of the early Pilgrims, and father of the first white child born in America, was arrested in Salem, some years after, for theft, found guilty and punished.

"We read with astonishment that John Winthrop, Governor of the colony, obtained the lease of an island in Boston harbor for use as a vineyard, the products of the same to be for his sole use and behoof. The rental of this island was to be a hogshead of wine, but it was wisely provided that this rental should not be paid until after his death. We find that, later, this rental was commuted to two bushels of apples; one to be delivered to the members of the General Court, and the other to be disposed of in some equally unproductive manner, as far as the state was concerned.

"A study of the records discloses the fact that the principal revenue of this colony for many a year was derived from the manufacture and sale of rum, and we can easily understand why, when a tariff law was proposed, that the part of it relating to a duty on molasses was objected to by the Massachusetts representatives.

"Let us continue our examination of the records, which, made by the hands of those living at the time, must be incontrovertible. The fact is disclosed very plainly that the Massachusetts Bay Colony was a company organized for the purpose of profit, and that profit was to belong to the chief



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members of the company. Not a settlement could be made without the authority of the General Court. Small grants of land were made to pioneer settlers who were to do the work of tilling the soil and fighting the Indians; but, following every one of these grants, came other and much larger grants to members of the Company. In other words, the common people started the settlement and the uncommon people obtained the profit.

"Read the history of Springfield and see how the Rev. Mr. Pynchon was finally forced to accede to the demands of the General Court and accept, for his settlers, small grants of land. Then follow the records and find how the principal members of this Godlike Company granted to themselves two or three thousand acres in that town for which they had rendered no equivalent.

"The excise law in force in the Massachusetts Bay Colony furnished a large revenue. People who sold beer, strong water, and wines grew rich because they had a monopoly. We find that the principal members of the Company were the ones who secured the licenses to sell these liquors, and from the proceeds they built up large fortunes.

"Look at another picture. The Pilgrims had fled from persecution. They yearned for an opportunity for free speech; they wished to secure for themselves and their posterity the blessings of religious liberty. I will not refer to the expulsion of Roger Williams, but will call attention to the fact that when some of the settlers, finding that certain taxes were too heavy to be borne uncom-

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plainingly, appealed to the General Court for relief, not only was their prayer denied, but they were treated as common criminals. Many of them had their ears cut off close to their heads; others were tied to logs and kept there until they recanted and declared that they had no grievances and that their Worshipful Masters had always treated them in the kindest and most lenient manner.

"Another picture. When the Pilgrims landed they were met by Samoset, the Indian chief, with the pleasing words, 'Welcome Englishmen!' But the records show some years after, a certain Capt. Church was authorized by the colony to capture young Indian men who were sold as slaves, to be sent to the West Indies. The usual price obtained was ten pounds and a considerable revenue accrued to the colony. But mark this! On one occasion Captain Church captured the son of the friendly Samoset. Even his hard heart was touched. He asked his Worshipful Masters to release the son of the man who had been kind to them when they landed on the bleak shores of New England. But one of the Worshipful Masters said that that was long ago, and that the young Indian was worth fifty dollars to the colony. This argument was unanswerable and the son of Samoset was sold into slavery.

"But you certainly know all these things, although, perhaps, you may have forgotten them."

The astonishment of the audience and the indignation of the speakers who had preceded Van

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Ness became spectacular. It was evident that the speaker had not come to defend but to attack, and the attack had been so unexpected in its nature, that there was no opportunity to readily present testimony which would tend to disprove the assertions so authoritatively and forcibly made.

The speaker went on:

"Perhaps I have recalled enough of the honorable deeds of your ancestors to suffice to answer the question which I must propound. Perhaps from what I have said you may learn what manner of men these Puritans were.

"I will now call attention to another fact which is probably not known to you but which, when I have told it to you, you will not forget. You will remember that the victorious army, led by him who presides over the destinies of your country, marched into the city of Quebec and raised the Stars and Stripes over the last of the British strongholds in America.

"While he stood there, accepting the manifestations of regard and admiration from the French populace liberated by his hand from the control of their British masters, the hand of the assassin aimed a blow at his heart. Before he could accomplish his murderous purpose I sprang upon him and throttled him. In my conflict with him, I received two wounds."

He pointed to the long, livid scar upon his cheek.

"This," he said, "is one of the marks left upon

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me by the hand of the assassin who would have murdered your President."

An air of suppressed excitement now became manifest. Men raised themselves upon their tip-toes in order that they might scan the face of the speaker. Necks were stretched forward and inquiring eyes fixed intently upon Van Ness, who bore the scrutiny without flinching.

"The assassin's name was unknown, but in one of his pockets was found a letter. The writer's name was unknown, for it was anonymous. The handwriting was unknown, for it was either feigned or written by some hired dupe; but there was one word written upon it which disclosed its origin, and if its author's name had been graven thereon in letters of blood, his identity could not have been more fully shown. That word was 'confidential!' There is but one public man in America who has found it necessary to mark all his letters, 'confidential.' He has never given his reason for using this word so freely, but I will supply it. He has always been ashamed to have these letters become public; for, to gratify his envy, antipathy, or his animosity, he has never failed in these confidential letters to attack both friend and foe, if he thought, thereby, that he could add to his power.

"The poor lump of useless clay that wielded the knife which struck at the heart of your President, and has left this sign upon my face, is the food of worms; but the man whose teachings inspired the act is still encased in human form and walks among his fellow-mortals, who cannot discern in

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his benign face the black and traitorous heart that his bosom conceals."

"His name! His name!! Who is he?" were the cries that came from all parts of the vast assemblage.

At that moment, there was a commotion on the platform. Some one had been overcome by the heat or excitement, or had fallen in a fit. Van Ness turned and saw that a certain face was missing.

The cries for the man's name were repeated in volume. Others sought to stem the tide of questioning by hoarse shouts, groans, and hisses. Van Ness faced the turbulent crowd without moving a muscle. He stood unflinchingly, with his clear eye fixed on the sea of upturned faces. Then, raising his hand, slowly, he pointed upward with his finger and cried in clear resonant tones:

"There is no need for me to speak the name of this man, for the hand of the Almighty has pointed him out!"

Van Ness at once left the platform and, in a few moments, was surrounded by a party of his friends and adherents. He entered a carriage and was driven quickly from the meeting, which broke up in a most tumultuous manner.

The papers gave a full account of the speeches delivered by the opponents of President Burr, but in none of them did there appear a line to indicate that Secretary Van Ness had been present or that he had addressed the assemblage.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### MASTER AND SLAVE.

MARIA REYNOLDS had accompanied the presidential party on its way from Quebec to Washington. After her arrival in that city, she had been reinstalled in her old position in Mrs. Alston's family, and when the President's daughter once more accompanied her father to the White House, certain duties were assigned to Maria, the payment for which insured her a comfortable living. Besides, she had the advantage of daily association with Mrs. Alston and her son. She wished to learn and had the instincts of a lady; so it is not strange that in a comparatively short time a great change took place in her personal appearance, manners, and speech.

Her hours were short and her labors easy. Every evening she walked in the grounds which surrounded the White House, often extending her trip to the north or west as circumstances required or the inclination of the moment prompted.

One evening, she had gone much farther than her usual wont. It was dusk and the buildings and the country assumed a strange look. She had turned to retrace her steps when a man stepped suddenly in front of her and accosted her.

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She had not heard from her former employer since her departure from Quebec and she fervently repeated the hope many times a day that she should never hear from him or see him again. Her husband and her child were dead. She had resolved to forget her past and all the disagreeable events which had formed it.

"Is your name Thankful Macy?" the man asked in a voice just above a whisper.

Maria's first inclination was to say that the person had made a mistake in addressing her and to give him her real name. Then the thought quickly flashed through her mind that such a course would be injurious and might cause her great trouble in the future. So she said, quietly:

"I have been called by that name."

"Your uncle, Mr. Thomas Macy, is in the city and would like to have you call and see him."

Maria felt an almost unconquerable inclination to flee from her questioner. Her employer, by some means, had learned of her return to Washington. He had sent his spy to learn her whereabouts. Having knowledge that her name was or had been Thankful Macy, how could she escape the interview? No, she must see him once more and for the last time.

"Where is he?" she asked.

The man did not speak, but passed her a slip of paper upon which a street and number were written. Maria clenched it nervously in her hand.

"I will come and see him to-morrow morning about ten o'clock. Good evening."

## MASTER AND SLAVE

She turned and walked swiftly away. The man was following her. She stopped until he came up to her.

"What is it?" she asked.

"You will not fail to come?" said he.

Maria's lip curled. "Tell my uncle that his niece will call upon him to-morrow morning."

"At what hour?" the man persisted.

"Between ten and eleven o'clock," she replied. To avoid further parleying, she walked rapidly homeward. Once, she stopped and looked backward, but the man was not in sight.

The next day, at the time appointed, Maria reached the house designated by the slip of paper. She had no sooner allowed the knocker to fall from her hand, when the door was suddenly opened and she was confronted by the man who had spoken to her the evening before. He led her up two flights of stairs to a room evidently located at the back part of the house. He pointed to a door. With her finger upon the latch, Maria stood irresolute for a moment. Then, summoning all her courage, she entered the room and found herself face to face with her former employer. He did not rise to meet her but pointed to a chair placed several feet from his own, probably in anticipation of the coming interview.

"I have not heard from you since you left Quebec. Why have you not written me? I have kept my part of our compact. Why have you been so remiss in keeping yours? I think you owe me an explanation."



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Maria felt that the crucial moment had arrived. She knew that her employer would judge the condition of her mind and of her attitude towards him by her first words and the manner in which they were spoken. She looked at him firmly, but not defiantly, and said in an even tone:

"I agree with you that I owe you an explanation. I should not have come here to-day, unless I were prepared to give my reasons for not communicating with you since my return to Washington. The fact is, that, while in Quebec, something occurred which forced me to leave your service."

"What was that?" he asked, sharply. "Why did you not write to me or tell me about it? Suppose that I, without giving you notice, had stopped sending you money for your services and expenses, would you have been satisfied to wait months for an explanation?"

As he spoke, his anger rose and the usual benign expression upon his face changed to one markedly different.

"You heard of the attempt to assassinate the President?" she began.

"Of course I did," he answered. "But what has that to do with me? If he had not been a hair-brained fool, he would have known that killing a bad ruler usually makes way for a worse one; for the new one fears a like retribution and becomes tyrannical and despotic."

"The hairbrained fool who tried to kill the President was my husband, James Reynolds."

## MASTER AND SLAVE

An ashen look, not unlike the gray pallor of death, crept over the face of the man who sat before her. For a moment, he did not speak.

"How can that be? The last I heard of him he was in jail on a long sentence."

"I do not know how he came there," said Maria, "but when I heard cries that the assassin was dead, I stepped forward with others to look at him. I recognized him and fell fainting upon his body. When I came to, I resolved that you and I must part forever."

"What led you to that remarkably logical conclusion? Did you suspect me of any hand in the affair? Does he suspect?"

"No," cried Maria. "The President is too noble-minded to allow such a suspicion to enter his mind. He has a high appreciation of your ability, for I have often heard him speak of you. He regrets that your great powers of mind are directed against him and the work which he has undertaken for the good of the country."

"I suppose I should feel honored at possessing his good opinion."

"I have done much to obtain it," said Maria.

"What do you mean by that?" he cried, starting to his feet. "Do you mean that you have betrayed me to him? That you have told him of our compact? If you have—"

"Spare your threats," said the woman, rising from her chair and facing him proudly. "He told me a story which made it necessary for me to tell

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him the truth. In order that he might know the truth, I had to tell him all."

"Ah! I see," said the man. "That accounts for the visit of General Van Ness to Boston. I thought there was some treachery at the bottom of it; but I do not believe that you have told him the truth. If you had, he would not allow you to remain in the house with his daughter and grandson. He is not a stickler for morality himself, but I am sure that if he knew your past he would not allow you to associate with his daughter. But I will see that he learns the whole truth and that very soon."

"I think I can convince you that he already knows the whole truth and that he has forgiven me. He had much to forgive, but he has done it. He thinks, as I do, that, although you were not directly connected with the attack upon his life, it was on account of my relations with you, for which I pray God to forgive me, that my husband committed the deed."

"I don't understand you. I thought you had said he did not suspect me?"

"Neither does he, nor do I, but he knows that my husband once extracted money from you as the price of my dishonor. He says that such a man would reason that, if he could remove your greatest rival from your path, you would again reward him. I thank God that he failed. If he had succeeded, he would have murdered a Cæsar, not a Catiline, as you have always called him."

"To what may I attribute your evident familiar-

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ity with Roman history?" the man asked sardonically.

"No one could live in the same house with the President and his daughter without learning something valuable every day."

Both resumed their seats, and there was silence for a few moments. Then the man looked up and said:

"What did the President tell you that, in your opinion, justified you in turning traitress after swearing upon your kness that you would be true to me?"

"I will tell you," said Maria. "He said that many years ago he became acquainted with a very beautiful young girl."

The man smiled.

"He says that he did not love her, but that he afterwards learned that she loved him. Another young man spoke of love to her but he did not couple with it an honorable proposal to make her his wife. She refused to see him and he, out of a spirit of revenge, circulated rumors against her good name. She fell ill. Her brain gave way. Then she was sent into the country. The young man who did not love her found out her hiding-place. He reasoned her into a calm frame of mind. He told her he would find a place of refuge for her. She trusted him and went to the place selected for her future home."

"Then Billings lied to me," muttered the man, in an undertone.

"The young man," Maria continued, "told her

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nurse to say to anyone who came to inquire about her mistress that she was dead and buried."

"This is a very pretty story so far," said the man, "but I cannot see what possible connection it has with you or your compact with me."

"You will in a moment," said Maria. "The young woman, freed from further persecution, soon regained her health. She married an honest, well-to-do farmer named Daniel Prentiss. My mother is still living. They had one child, a daughter, who married, but is now a widow."

"She is living! She is living!" the man repeated several times to himself in an undertone. Then she saw that look of malignity upon his face which few living persons had ever seen, but which always came to it when, in his office or his library, he was concocting some plot to be carried out against those whom he considered to be his enemies.

"What has all this nonsense to do with me?" he cried, starting once more to his feet. "I see nothing in what you have said to excuse your action in any way, or give an adequate reason for your treachery. You have made a great mistake, young woman, in allying your fortunes with those of my deadliest enemy. What the result of your course will be, you will only learn when it is too late for you to repent."

"It will take only a few more words to complete my story," said Maria, as she arose and moved towards the door. "My mother's name was Adelaide Clifton! Am I justified now in your sight?"

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There was a stony pallor in the man's face. He reeled. In falling he tried to clutch the arm of a chair, but he failed in this and fell prostrate upon the floor, just as he had done upon the platform that evening in Boston.

Maria, without stopping to think, rushed from the room and sped rapidly down the two flights of stairs. When she reached the hallway, she tried to call for help, but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth; she opened the front door and looked out. The man who had spoken to her the night before and who had admitted her to the house was leaning against the fence with his gaze fixed upon the front door. Maria quickly resolved upon her course of action. She ran down the steps and approached the man.

"My uncle has fallen in a fit! Go up at once and see if you can help him. I will go at once for a doctor."

She remembered the way homeward and ran quickly in that direction. She turned once and saw the man enter the house and close the door. She ran at full speed. No matter what people might think, she could not walk. She was running away from danger and disgrace—towards a home of happiness. As she ran, her thoughts came quickly. Her past life had not been pure, but she would make it so in the future. The color rose to her cheeks, her eyes grew brighter, her whole face was transfigured. She had now no master—she was no longer a slave!

## CHAPTER XXX.

### ANOTHER CINCINNATUS.

PRESIDENT BURR still maintained silence regarding the question of another term. But when it was announced that he would make a tour of the country, stopping at the principal cities, the step was considered both by his friends and enemies to be an appeal for the further support of the people. What other reason could he have for making such an extended tour unless it was to inform his friends, personally, that he counted upon their support to secure him a third term?

By the advice of his intimate associates, the tour did not include New England. It was thought best not to run the risk of any personal affront or assault. Besides, there still lived in Massachusetts the man who had been, as Sec. Van Ness had said, pointed out by the hand of Heaven.

No king, ruling over contented and happy subjects, could have been welcomed with more enthusiasm and loyalty than were shown to President Burr in the principal cities of the country. But still this Sphinx among men maintained complete silence as regarded his further political advancement.

He returned to Washington. The time was

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approaching when the election was to take place, and presidential electors were to be selected. Then, suddenly, appeared in the newspapers, throughout the country, a communication signed by William P. Van Ness. It was short and to the point. It declared in language that could not be mistaken that Aaron Burr had no further presidential aspirations. The Constitution had been amended at the President's suggestion and provided that the Chief Executive should serve but one term. In his case, as his first term had been for four years and he would naturally have been elected for four more, it had fallen to him to serve for twelve years instead of eight; but he had done this in order to conform to the Constitution; besides, if he had resigned at the end of the first four years, it would have left many vexatious political and military questions unsettled, and the Vice President had not wished to have these great responsibilities fall upon him.

Then speculation ran rife as to who would be Burr's successor. When it was known that Gen. Andrew Jackson was the President's personal choice for the position, there was a rapid crystallization of sentiment in his favor, and he was chosen President by an almost unanimous vote; the only ballots thrown against him being cast by the electors from Massachusetts who voted uniformly against him, with several negative votes from others of the New England states.

President Burr, before retiring, delivered a farewell address to the army, which had been his pride



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from the day when he first took command of it at New Orleans to the day when he entered the city of Quebec at its head. Washington had issued a farewell address to his army which the friends of Hamilton always insisted was written by him; but, from the day when Hamilton became a member of Washington's staff to the hour when they quarreled and parted, it had been the fashion for Hamilton's too-zealous friends to decry the ability of the Father of his Country and to ascribe his state papers and even his military victories to the suggestions and inspirations which he had received from Col. Hamilton.

Following the address to the army, came one to the people of the United States. In this, President Burr thanked them for the confidence and support which they had given him. He called attention to the fact that he was now sixty-four years of age, during forty-five years of which time he had been almost constantly in the service of his country.

"The cup of my ambition is filled to overflowing," he said. "I have received at your hands much more than I have deserved—in fact, no living man could deserve it. I have left to me the remembrance of your unfaltering, continuous, and unwavering patriotism. The country is at peace. You have voted to trust the destinies of your country in the hands of a soldier of conspicuous bravery and unimpeached honesty. This shows that you have an accurate and ripened judgment of men. I have left to me my daughter and grand-

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son. The hand of Heaven has taken from our family circle the husband of my daughter and the father of my grandson. The duty devolves upon me, and it is a most precious one, of providing for them while life remains. I shall build for them, and for myself, a home to which we shall retire. I shall ever take a deep and abiding interest in the happiness and prosperity of our common country, and, if at any time that country should need my services in the field or forum, if the arm is not withered or the hand palsied, it shall be at your service!"

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### "DEFEND YOURSELF!"

**A** ARON BURR was always a generous man. Whatever might have been his fortune, it never would have sufficed for his needs; not that his personal wants were so great, but a fortune, however large, would not have been sufficient to meet the demands made upon his generosity. His daughter's husband, Joseph Alston, had left her a very valuable estate. Although possessing great confidence in his father-in-law, at Burr's own request, before the departure of the army for Canada, his property had been left in the hands of trustees to be administered for the benefit of his wife and son. Theodosia, however, insisted that her father should occupy with them the home they intended to build.

A site was selected and plans for the new home were drawn. Its construction was left in charge of the architect and Mr. Van Ness, to whom Burr had thoroughly explained his personal wishes, so far as they were to be consulted.

Then ex-President Burr, his daughter, and grandson, accompanied by some of his most devoted friends and adherents, started upon a tour

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through the principal countries of Europe. The trip had been suggested by himself. He had felt a sense of relief when the day and hour and, at last, the minute came, when the reins of power which had been within his grasp for a period of twelve years were dropped never to be taken up again by him. But he was not a man who could sit idle and let the great world pass by him in panoramic show. No, his had always been an active and moving spirit. He must go with the world and not sit still and let it pass by him.

The party of distinguished Americans, led by the illustrious President-General, soon became guests at regal courts. England, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy, and France, in turn, were visited, and, in the course of the trip, hundreds of articles intended to ornament Theodosia's new home were purchased.

A short time after their arrival in Paris, Gen. Burr received an unexpected and, as it proved afterward, an astonishing and unhappy visit. It was from the young Marquis de Rolletaire, and from Henri's lips Burr learned that the Fates had been against him; his plan to wait and hope had failed, for almost the first intelligence that Henri conveyed to him was the fact that Stephanie had become la Marquise de Rolletaire.

The fact was, that after establishing her right to the reimbursement from the National Treasury and arranging for the restoration of the old feudal castle which her ancestors had occupied for hundreds of years, there came a great change in her.

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She was not now a pensioner upon her cousin's bounty. She was a rich woman, much richer in both land and money than Henri. After a long and bitter conflict between her reason and her heart, she had decided that she had been deceived in President-General Burr. She felt now that the courtesies which he had shown to her were no more than he probably would have shown to any other woman in her position. As she thought of the events connected with their meeting and their intercourse up to the day of their parting at Halifax, a feeling of shame surged over her. Had she been presumptuous? Had she been unwomanly in presenting that request to accompany her cousin upon the field of battle? As she had argued it then, if the wives of the American generals went with their husbands, why was it not perfectly proper for her to accompany her cousin? Now the remembrance of her position came to her as she had never realized it before—that the American ladies were with their husbands, but that Henri was not her husband.

When she put away the hope that she might one day become the wife of the hero whom she worshiped, she became uneasy and restless. Although surrounded by faithful servants, she was, in reality, alone in the great castle. There was no relative, no aged aunt or married sister, who could come and live with her, and thus enable her to open her castle to those social festivities which she had enjoyed to a limited extent in Montreal, and for the pleasures of which she now felt a great

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yearning. In what way could she secure the social position which she desired?

She knew that she had but to give the slightest indication to Henri de Rolletaire and he would be at her feet. After all, what better course could she pursue than to become his wife? She knew he loved her devotedly. Although she was three years older than her cousin, that fact could never have been divined by looking at them. There was no necessity now for Henri to prove himself a hero. There was every promise that the remainder of their lives would be full of daily commonplaces.

By a different course of reasoning, but by one which brought him to the same line of thought and to the same conclusion, Henri de Rolletaire had been influenced. He would plead his suit once more. He was, despite his lack of heroic qualities, impetuous and impulsive. He undertook the journey to his cousin's house after a single day's reflection.

It was late in the afternoon of a July day that he presented himself, unasked and unannounced, before Stephanie. He had chosen to come unaccompanied even by a single servant. The battle to be fought was not one of war, but of love, and, in that conflict, an assistant could be of no service. To him, she seemed more beautiful than ever. The warmth of her welcome caused his heart to beat fast and sent the blood surging through his veins.

"Absence has made her think of me," he said to himself, "and perhaps she has learned to love me.

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I will try my fate once more before I go back to Rolletaire."

Henri was naturally jovial by nature, quick in speech and sharp at repartee. There was a clash of wits instead of swords at the dinner table. Stephanie had eaten the meal so many times in absolute silence, surrounded by the grave faces of her attendants, who bowed obsequiously at the mention of her slightest wish, that it is not strange that she compared this merry meal with its solemn predecessors. Her cousin had grown stouter and more manly in appearance. He had always been good-looking, but Stephanie was forced to confess to herself, as she gazed upon him, that he was really a handsome young man.

Before the end of the third day of his visit he had proffered his love again in impassioned tones. There are no words which sound so sweet to a woman's ears as those which contain a declaration of love; but those words must not be spoken with cold, measured, business-like utterance. They must be full of ardor, rapture, and enthusiasm. Given the right time and place, there is a magic in such words so uttered, which an impulsive woman always finds it hard—almost impossible, to resist.

The dinner, like those preceding it, since Henri's arrival, had been an occasion for both mental and physical pleasure. Afterward, they had wandered through the immense grounds which surrounded the old castle. Hand in hand, they ascended a small hill and stood on the summit, looking toward the West. The sun had sunk below the horizon,

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but its glow had not yet faded away, and the light feathery clouds were tinted a pale pink.

"Just look at those beautiful clouds!" cried Stephanie. "I think heaven must lie beyond them."

"Perhaps so," replied Henri. "I know that Rolletaire is beyond them, but it will never be a heaven to me until I can find a queen to reign therein."

"If she were a queen," said Stephanie, "and you were but a Marquis, you would have to obey her slightest command."

"Willingly would I do that," cried Henri, "if the woman who is the queen of my heart would consent to become the queen of my home."

As he uttered the words, he gazed into her face. That look could not be mistaken, and her eyes fell.

Henri took her hand in his and she let it remain there, unresistingly.

"Come to Rolletaire, Stephanie, and become its queen—my queen. I, and all who live there, will become your loving servitors."

She drew back her hand. Then she clasped both of them tightly together.

"You tempt me, Henri, but I fear I am not worthy to occupy a throne."

"No one there will dispute your worth," he cried. "If you were to send me to the block I should accept my fate willingly, for I should feel that you were right and that I was wrong. The Chateau de Rolletaire," he went on, "is not so grand as your castle, but it is more homelike."



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That," said he, pointing to the immense pile which loomed up behind them, "reminds me of the days when knights fought their way to maidens' hearts through seas of blood. Since we were children together, I have always loved you, Stephanie. I have always hoped—wished—prayed that you might become my wife. Years ago, you told me that I was too young and no hero. I am older now, but, I am afraid, not much more of a hero. And yet, Stephanie, I think it would require less courage in me to kill an enemy than it does to stand here pleading for your love and fearing that you will say that it can never be mine."

To his delight, Stephanie approached nearer to him and extended her hand, which he grasped, convulsively. Then, in a low, sweet voice, she said with that quiet dignity which was so characteristic of her:

"I will go with you to Rolletaire."

Fearful of losing her when she had been so unexpectedly won, he insisted upon an early marriage, and, within three weeks after his arrival at d'Auxrois, the Countess Stephanie had become la Marquise de Rolletaire.

Stephanie had heard of the European tour of Gen. Burr. She knew that he was to visit Paris. Then there came to her a desire to show him the magnificence of her home and the splendor of her surroundings. To be sure, this was womanly vanity, but for this she must be held excusable.

Henri's trip to Paris had been to convey to Gen. Burr and his party an invitation to become the

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guests of the Marquis and his wife. After a consultation with Theodosia, it was decided by Gen. Burr that he, his daughter, and grandson should accept the invitation.

Following Henri's departure for home, certain previously arranged festivities occupied a fortnight's time before the promised visit was paid. During that period, the Marquis and his wife vied with each other in lavish expenditure of money and in making unexampled preparations for the reception of their distinguished guests. It was decided by them to have a reception during the evening of the day upon which Gen. Burr and his party arrived.

To this, the nobility and gentry within a radius of twenty miles of the Chateau de Rolletaire were invited. Gen. Burr spoke French fluently, as though native born. He was a past master in repartee, badinage, and persiflage. The nobility were charmed with this Republican who had the appearance and grace, in fact, all the qualities of a King's courtier; yea—even of a King himself!

Among the guests was a gallant cavalry colonel, who bore the name of Gustave Marnet. His inseparable companion was a lieutenant named Emil Delmonte. They were both men of engaging presence, were fine dancers, and always in demand at balls and receptions. They were both adept in the small talk of the day and delighted in nothing more than repeating bits of society gossip which, as is usually the case, often involve matters of a more or less scandalous nature.

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It was late in the evening devoted to the reception. The guests were beginning to leave; in fact, Gen. Burr and his party had retired some little time before, but a large number of the gay assemblage still remained. The orchestra was discoursing sweet music and those who were present had their senses so charmed that they were loth to break the ties which bound them to the enchanting scene.

Standing apart from the throng, Col. Marnet and Lieut. Delmonte were talking over the events of the evening and of the respective social successes secured by each. Fancying that they were alone, for, looking ahead, they could see no one in close enough proximity to overhear the conversation, Col. Marnet said:

"I never could see why that beautiful creature, Stephanie d'Auxrois, married that lack-lustre young man whom she calls her husband. I heard a rumor that before la Marquise came to France that there was a love affair between her and the guest of the evening. What a superb couple they would have made!"

"I do not believe there is anything in it," said Lieut. Delmonte. "I think if she had had a ghost of a chance to become the wife of Gen. Burr, she would not have married a title, for, as you say, that is about all there is to her husband."

Both men heard the sound of advancing footsteps. They suddenly ceased, and there, standing before them, his face livid with rage, was the Marquis de Rolletaire.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "I am not an eaves-

"DEFEND YOURSELF!"

dropper. I came to inform Colonel Marnet that there would be a *fete champetere* on the grounds of the Chateau to-morrow afternoon. Unintentionally, I overheard your conversation. Under the circumstances, you will, of course, recognize that I cannot give you the intended invitation, nor ever ask you to be guests in my house again; and I would add, by way of advice, the caution that neither of you gentlemen repeat in public what I have overheard you say in private. If you should do so, I shall feel myself warranted in demanding satisfaction."

If Col. Marnet had been alone, it is possible that an altercation might have been avoided; but he could not stand the cool and intentionally insulting tones in which the speech was delivered in the presence of his friend Delmonte, who had always looked upon him as the incarnation of bravery.

"The Marquis de Rollteaire presumes upon the fact that he is the host of the occasion," said Col. Marnet. "I am well aware that the truth should not be spoken at all times and in all places, and perhaps what I have said was most inopportunately uttered; but I beg to inform the Marquis de Rolletaire that when I am outside of his Chateau I shall not acknowledge any supervision of my language or conduct by him. If I choose to repeat to others what I have said to my friend Delmonte, to-night, and it should not please the Marquis de Rolletaire, I shall be happy to give him whatever satisfaction he desires, in any manner that he may wish."

The words of this defiance were spoken in a

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manner that convinced the Marquis that the next day Col. Marnet would repeat, in some cabaret or cafe, the events of their meeting. As has been said, Henri was both impulsive and impetuous. Besides that, he was jealous. He had never imagined that there was any feeling of love between Gen. Burr and his wife. To find that it was common gossip angered him beyond endurance. Without a thought of possible consequences, he stepped up to Col. Marnet and gave him a stinging blow in the face with the back of his hand.

"So soon?" said Col. Marnet, coolly. "It is my right, now, to demand satisfaction."

"And you shall have it," cried Henri, "instantly."

"I may choose the time and place. This challenge comes from me and not from you."

"Certainly, it is your right," replied Henri.

"So be it," said the Colonel. "I will fight you with swords, in half an hour, on your own estate. I believe there is an artificial lake not far distant from the Chateau, in the centre of which is a small island that is large enough for our purpose."

"As you will," said the Marquis.

Lieut. Delmonte offered his services as second to Col. Marnet, and they were accepted. Henri went in search of some one to act in a similar capacity. Then the thought came to him that if he disclosed the reason for the quarrel to his second, that another one would learn of the scandal and might spread it. The time passed quickly. Only ten minutes remained before the meeting was to

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occur and Henri had not chosen any one for his second.

Col. Marnet and Lieut. Delmonte entered one of the boats which they found on the shore of the lake and rowed over to the island. What was their surprise, later, to see the Marquis arrive alone, unaccompanied by a second.

"This is somewhat irregular," remarked Col. Marnet. "I had supposed that General Burr would have accompanied you."

This sarcastic speech Henri regarded as an added insult.

"It will make no difference," he cried. "After I have killed you, Lieutenant Delmonte and I will be equally matched. I do not intend that the possessor of the tongue that linked my name with scandal, or the ears which heard it, shall leave this island alive."

Col. Marnet smiled, grimly. The word was given by Lieut. Delmonte—and the swords were crossed. Henri seemed controlled by an ungovernable fury; he fought desperately and succeeded in giving Col. Marnet a severe wound in the sword arm. Col. Marnet had imagined that the affair could be settled if either one received a slight thrust. He had no personal enmity toward the Marquis; he had been led to speak as he did from the manner assumed by the Marquis in addressing him in the presence of his friend. Lieut. Delmonte whispered to the Colonel:

"Take care, Colonel! He means to kill you."

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"If that is so," said Col. Marnet, in an undertone, "two can play at that game."

Once more they crossed swords, and this time the consummate skill of Col. Marnet was quickly shown. He rushed upon his opponent and displayed that intimate knowledge of thrust and parry which had won him renown upon the battlefield.

The unscientific thrusts made by Henri were easily parried. Henri felt that he was at his opponent's mercy. He made a feint, as though to retreat. He had hoped that his antagonist would be thrown off his guard by his movement, but Col. Marnet was wary, and ready to bring the affair to a fatal conclusion. Henri, after retreating, advanced quickly and made a thrust which might have again wounded his opponent; but Col. Marnet, by a dexterous movement, parried the thrust and, closing with his opponent, drove his sword through the body of the Marquis.

"You have killed him!" cried Delmonte.

"But you said that he intended to kill me," said Col. Marnet. "It would have been a strange duel if both of us had been killed."

The last guest had departed and Stephanie awaited the return of her husband. She had not seen him to speak with for nearly an hour. Where could he have gone? A quarter of an hour more passed by, and he did not return. Then the servants were sent in every direction through the grounds to look for him. They came back with the word that no trace of him could be found. Then

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she directed them to provide themselves with lanterns and to cover the entire estate.

"Something, certainly, must have happened to the Marquis," she said.

One of the servants noticed that both of the boats had gone from their moorings, and, by the aid of a pair of sharp eyes, discerned that they were drawn up upon the shore of the little island in the middle of the lake.

When the servant brought word to her about the boats, Stephanie trembled with fear and her mind was filled with a horrid presentiment. To whom could she go? To whom could she confide her fears? Then she thought of Gen. Burr. Why had she not done this before? He was the man of all others to give her wise counsel and to advise her what to do.

"Was there any way of reaching the island?" was his first inquiry. "Could another boat be procured?"

"Oh, yes," cried Stephanie. "Come at once. We must not lose a moment. There is another boat in the boathouse."

With hurried steps, they went in that direction. Stephanie forbade the servants to follow her. If she were to be forced to look upon disgrace or death, only this trusted friend should be with her.

They entered the boat and the intervening distance was soon covered. As they reached the shore, the moon, which for some time had been covered by a dense cloud, escaped from its embrace and threw a weird, white light over the island.



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It took them but a moment to reach the scene of the encounter and realize, to its full extent, the tragedy which had been enacted. There, upon the turf, face downward, lay the dead body of her husband! She knew that he must be dead from the look of sullen defiance upon the faces of Col. Marnet and his friend. Her husband's sword had fallen from his grasp. She spoke no word, but stepped forward and picked it up. She looked at it. There was blood upon its point.

"Thank God!" she thought. "He must have wounded his opponent and died like a man—a hero at last!" Then she glanced at the hilt of the sword. Upon it was the crest of the Rolletaire family. The last of his name, he had not dishonored it.

Then she looked at his victorious opponent. He stood, still holding his sword, point downward, in his hand; upon the blade were dark red stains—the blood of her husband. Then yearning for vengeance—an echo of the spirit which had burned, hundreds of years before, in the breasts of her kingly ancestors, rose in her. She was the last to bear the name d'Auxrois, as Henri had been the last of his line; but she was now a Rolletaire, and his honor was hers.

Grasping her husband's sword, she advanced toward Col. Marnet, and cried in that tone of implacable fury which only a frenzied woman can utter, "Defend yourself!"

Col. Marnet looked at her an instant, and then said:

"I will not fight with a woman."

*"DEFEND YOURSELF!"*

"No!" cried Stephanie. "You will not fight with a woman, but you will say things to injure her reputation, and when her husband calls upon you for an explanation, you kill him! When I demand satisfaction, you shield yourself behind the fact that I am a woman. Will nothing insult you, and make you act like a man? Colonel Marnet, you are a coward!"

The Colonel's face flushed red, and he clenched his sword.

Burr had seen all that had taken place, heard every word that had been uttered. Would this ghastly picture of which he had been a witness ever vanish from his memory? He was unarmed, but he was a gentleman, and knew his duty.

He advanced toward Stephanie and said:

"Madam, allow me to demand the satisfaction that he denies you on account of your sex. I do not think he will refuse me."

Burr placed his hand upon the hilt of the sword, but Stephanie retained her hold upon it. She looked up into his face, and her eyes expressed the thanks which she could not speak.

Here was the hero who was to avenge the crime which had made her a widow! Burr stood, expectantly. Stephanie raised the sword and pressed her lips upon its shining blade. Burr ascribed the act to the impetuosity of the French character, and thought that she was blessing the sword, preparatory to the duel.

He was not surprised at her act, but her next step filled him with astonishment and dismay.

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Raising the sword above her head, she ran to the edge of the lake and threw the weapon into the water.

Quickly retracing her steps, she again faced Col. Marnet.

"Go, you murderer!" she cried, "and exult over your crime. There shall be no more bloodshed upon my account; but to-morrow the King shall know the truth! Oh, my friend!" she cried, turning to Burr. "What right had I to ask you—to allow you to risk your life? Pardon me, I forgot myself for the moment."

Even her strong nature could not bear the intense strain upon it. Her eyes filled with tears, her strength gave way, and she would have fallen if Burr had not supported her. She looked up, and said:

"But you are safe; he will not dare to harm you."

Col. Marnet calmly sheathed his sword and linked his arm in that of his friend. As they walked away, he turned to Delmonte and, as a grim smile spread over his face, he said:

"My lady did not wish to lose both of her lovers."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### RIVERMOUNT.

THE result of the duel brought on another crucial period in Burr's life. Since his separation from Stephanie, he had felt more than ever that she was the one woman in the world whom he could have wished to make his wife. When he learned of her marriage, he had put away that thought forever. But now, by this tragedy, affairs were as they were before. But should he speak? Certainly not now. By no possibility could such a course become allowable. There was but one thing to do, to extend to the bereaved widow the assurance of his most tender sympathy.

To his sympathetic words were added those full of deeper feeling expressed by his daughter Theodosia. Then the widow was left alone with her dead husband and her grief. Burr knew that it was better so. Fate had reunited them, but, at the same time, it had put a barrier between them through which they could not pass at present.

When ex-President Burr and his party arrived in New York, on their return from Europe, they were given a great reception by the populace.

Burr learned from his friend Van Ness that the new house was complete outwardly, and only

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needed its interior furnishings and embellishments. Carpetings and tapestries, inlaid furniture, vases and pictures which had been purchased in Europe were speedily conveyed up the Hudson River to Rivermount, which was the name that had been settled upon by Burr and his daughter as that for their future home.

It stood on a bluff, some three miles above Hoboken, on the Jersey side of the Hudson River. Its summit was one hundred and fifty feet above the surface of the stream, and, from it, a grand view could be had in every direction of the surrounding country. It was as though an eagle had sought out the highest eyrie and had there built its nest.

An army of workmen took possession of the great mansion, and, in a short time, the treasures which had been brought from Europe and which represented not only European workmanship but Oriental finery and magnificence, were put in place; and Burr and his daughter and grandson sat down in their palace among the clouds and felt that after a long and tumultuous life an era of peace was to follow.

A short time after the elevation of Gen. Jackson to the Presidency, Burr received an urgent summons from the Chief Executive to visit him in Washington. No one knew the exact object of the interview or what took place during Burr's visit; but when the President, in his message to Congress, suggested certain changes in the Constitution, both the friends and enemies of Burr thought, and perhaps not without reason, that their

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suggestion was due to advice given by the ex-President.

One of the recommendations made by President Jackson was that an amendment should be made to the Constitution which should declare in unmistakable terms that when a state of its own free will, and with the approval of its citizens, became a member of the Federal Union, that state could not for any reason dissolve its connection with the federation without the consent of all the other states of the Union.

Another suggestion was that all ex-Presidents and ex-Vice-Presidents should be entitled for the eight years following the expiration of their terms of office to hold seats in the National Senate. There they should be accorded the usual salary and the right to speak upon all public questions, but should not have a vote except upon the ratification or rejection of treaties with foreign powers. It was provided, however, that if a retiring President or Vice-President did not wish to accept this privilege, it was not mandatory upon him to attend the sessions of the Senate. In order to secure uniformity of practice, it was provided that three months before the meeting of each session of Congress those Presidents and Vice-Presidents entitled to the privilege should inform the presiding officer of the Senate if they intended to be present at the next session.

The principal argument made in support of the last amendment was that it was both unfair and unjust when a public man had achieved the proud

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eminence of Chief Executive of the American republic, that he should, by leaving office, be thrown, as it were, to the foot of the ladder of Fame and forbidden to remount.

"It could in no way," said one of its supporters, "detract from the Presidential dignity by making an ex-President or Vice-President an honorary member of the Senate. Instead of breaking at one fell swoop the ties that have bound a man of intellect closely to the questions affecting the destiny of the republic, it will allow him to still take part in political duties, if he so desires, and give the results of his experience for the benefit of his brother Senators. Our present plan resembles that of a hive of bees; each, after she has served their purpose, destroys their queen, and ejects her useless body from the hive. In five thousand years, it has not occurred to the bees that their course is one of flagrant injustice. Let us not imitate, longer, such ignorant conservatism."

The opponents of Burr immediately started, in the anti-administration newspapers, their attacks upon the proposed amendments, declaring that it was Burr's intention to try again for the Presidency at the expiration of Jackson's term; that the object of the amendment in relation to the succession was to enable him, when once more at the head of the government, to use the military power to put down any attempt at revolution, or insurrection, in any state, which, they declared, Burr would stigmatize as an attempt at secession.

But the occupants of Rivermount apparently

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took no further interest in American politics. Within its walls, however, the prosperity and needs of the country were daily discussed; but no written line or spoken word emanated from its residents to influence public opinion.

The enemies of Burr, as the time approached to choose a successor to President Jackson, declared that the political hermit of Rivermount was using every effort to secure the choice of a certain political and military friend as Jackson's successor; but their attacks fell to the ground of their own weight. There was nothing to sustain them, and Gen. Zachary Taylor was nominated and elected to succeed Gen. Jackson.

Then Burr's opponents declared that he had, in reality, founded an empire; for the control of the country, ever since he had been elected President, had been in the hands of the military.

"General Burr," said they, "was followed by General Jackson; General Jackson is to be followed by General Taylor; General Taylor is to be followed by some other General, and so the American Republic will become in fact a military despotism."

These factional attacks produced but little effect on the American people. Burr, General Jackson, and General Taylor were known to be men of incorruptible honesty and unimpeachable loyalty. The fact that they had served their country in the field and had contributed to its glory could not be used against them, and Gen. Taylor was elected to the Presidency by nearly as unanimous a vote as had been given to Jackson.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE LADY IN RED.

**A**BOUT a year after the ex-President's return from Europe, yellow fever had shown itself, suddenly, in Mobile and had spread, with unexampled rapidity through the Southern States. There was lack of physicians, there was lack of nurses, and there was lack of money with which to pay for medical supplies and the wages of attendants.

When the scourge was at its height, there appeared in the city of New Orleans a woman in whose beautiful face there were signs of a great sorrow. She was attired in a costume of red, which unwonted color attracted the attention of all. With the single exception of a red rose, which was placed in her hair, she wore no ornaments; her hair, abundant and glossy, was black, as were the sad, sorrowful eyes.

From city to city and from town to town she went, an angel of beneficence and mercy. She seemed to be possessed of untold wealth, for whatever was needed was paid for by her, with unstinted hand. To none would she give her full name, nor even her first name, and so those who worked with her, those whose sufferings she lessened, and those

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beside whose bed of death she stood knew her only as "The Lady of the Rose."

The plague reached its climax, and then, gradually, its strength waned; and as its power departed, so the physical endurance of The Lady of the Rose gave way. She had overtaxed her physical and mental powers. It was in Charleston, the last city to be visited by the pestilence, and in which it developed unparalleled virulence, that The Lady of the Rose was forced to desist from her labor of love and mercy and become herself the patient of a noted physician by whose side she had stood at hundreds of bedsides.

When in that city, she had been the guest of a Miss Carola Sumter, a maiden lady about fifty years of age, whose life had been devoted to works of charity and philanthropy.

"Dismiss your fears, Miss Sumter," said Dr. Ledyard. "Our patient has simply collapsed from overwork. If she will but rest, under your kind ministrations, I think she will soon recover; and you need have no fear that she will have the dreaded fever. If she had not been immune, she would have fallen a victim long before this."

Dr. Ledyard's prognostications that The Lady of the Rose would not have the prevailing fever proved true; but, in spite of his medical skill and all that the loving care of Miss Sumter could do, their patient grew weaker rather than stronger, day by day.

"My dear doctor," said Miss Sumter, one morning, "I have an idea, and I hope that you will con-

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sider it a good one. I don't think our patient will ever get well in this climate; she needs a more bracing atmosphere to tone up her system. Now, I have a friend in New York whom I have not seen for years. She has just returned from Europe, and I am anxious to have her tell me about her travels. We will go by water, and perhaps the sea breeze will do more for our patient than doctors and nurses, be they ever so learned or attentive."

"I have always thought," said Dr. Ledyard, "that if women would enter the medical profession they could bring to its duties a quality in which many of our learned practitioners are sadly lacking. Do not misunderstand me, my dear Miss Sumter, I do not mean personal beauty—the quality to which I refer is common sense."

The details for the sea voyage were soon arranged. As Miss Sumter had predicted, the sea breeze worked an almost magical change, from a physical point of view, in *The Lady of the Rose*. She loved the ocean, and, during the trip, seemed to have forgotten her troubles, whatever they might have been. But, within a week after their arrival in New York, she again fell into that state of apathy and apparent despondency in which she had been before leaving Charleston.

Miss Sumter had at first taken rooms in a private house, but as her friend, although the picture of physical health, apparently grew weaker, day by day, she decided to have her removed to a private hospital where she could have the best medical attendance.

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Miss Sumter explained that her reason for taking this course was not because she had wearied of caring for her friend, but because she felt that in the hospital she would have the benefit of the medical knowledge of a number of physicians, instead of depending upon the skill of one.

"I have no fault to find," said The Lady of the Rose. "I know what you have done is for the best, and thank you; but I am afraid that a dozen doctors could do no more for me than one can."

"You have something on your mind, Rose," said Miss Sumter. "I call you that because I know you by no other name."

Her friend looked up and smiled sadly.

"Rose! It is a sweet name. I like it. It will do as well as any other."

Miss Sumter was not wholly influenced by curiosity, but the vagueness of the reply did give her a momentary feeling of disappointment. Why did not her friend trust her, and tell her something of her past? She had comforted many whose hearts were sad, and she thought to herself that perhaps she might have comforted The Lady of the Rose.

The day before Miss Sumter took her friend to the hospital, she had asked her a simple question. The reply was so irrelevant that the woman's feelings were somewhat hurt by it. When a woman is injured in this way, it is but natural for her to seek a mild revenge, even though the object of this diluted vengeance is a beloved friend.

"Rose," she said, "when you go to the hospital you will be obliged to take off that red dress. It

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is none of my business, of course, but I have always wondered why you wear so unbecoming a costume."

"I wear it so that I may not forget my sin," said The Lady in Red, slowly.

"Your sin?" cried Miss Sumter, with a laugh, which she quickly smothered when she saw the sorrowful look upon her friend's face, and noticed that the tears were gathering in her large, beautiful eyes. "Forgive me, Rose," she cried, "and forget that I ever asked you the question."

"You had a right to ask me," said Rose. "Perhaps I shall feel better if I tell you. A great many years ago, more than a hundred, one of my ancestors, a young man, played a practical joke upon his younger brother which ended in the latter's terrible death. Overcome by remorse, the murderer, for such he felt himself to be, went to a neighboring monastery and confessed his unintentional sin to an aged monk. I do not remember all that he did by way of penance, but it was a tradition in our family that he was compelled to wear a costume of red for the period of a year. Wherever he went, his strange habiliment attracted the gaze of all; seeing the eyes of others fixed upon him, he recalled his costume, which brought back to him the remembrance of his sin. Thus, day by day, did he and his costume of red and his deep remorse keep company! I have not killed my brother, my dear friend, but every time that I look at my garb I think of my sin; and my dress of red, my remorse, and I keep company."

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"Well, I do not care to know what your sin was, Rose," said Miss Sumter, tenderly, "but if I had charge, in the next world, of the Great Book in which the deeds of your past life are recorded, I know I should blot out every mark and leave your page a pure, unsullied white."

Dr. Ledyard had accorded Miss Sumter common sense. She was also a woman of resource, that is, she did not sit down idly and allow matters to drift. When they reached the point of stagnation, it was her maxim that something should be done at once to change the course of events. One morning, when she came to the hospital to see her friend, she said:

"Rose, I must leave you for a few days."

Noticing the look of regret upon her friend's face, she added quickly:

"But I will not go, if you think you cannot spare me."

"Oh, I did not mean that," cried Rose. "I know my face must have spoken the thought that came into my mind. I have been very selfish. Will you pardon me, Miss Sumter?"

"How many times, Rose, have I expressly forbidden you to call me Miss Sumter? There seems to me to be no name so stern and dignified as Miss Sumter. If you love me, Rose, and I believe you do, call me Carola. Those who used to call me by that name are dead. I used to love the name when I was a child, and even old maids, like me, have their childish moments."

"Forgive me, Carola," said Rose, "for my mis-

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deeds. I am afraid, if I remain an invalid much longer, I shall become positively wicked. For how long shall you be away?"

"Only a few days," was the reply. "I shall return as soon as I have seen my dear friend and have had a good long talk with her. But what will you do for company, Rose? If I were acquainted here, I would have some one take my place, and come to see you every day."

"You can do me a great favor, Carola; find a priest, and tell him that a woman who is too sick to come to him wishes that he would come to her."

Father Patricio, a man fully sixty years of age, with whitened hair, but in whose face there was a combined look of austerity and kindly feeling, sat beside The Lady of the Rose. For a few moments he regarded her. When he had first entered the room, her eyes were closed. She had opened them, and evidently remembered why he was there. Then she closed her eyes again, without speaking.

"Daughter," the priest began, "I have come at your bidding. Do you wish the last offices of the Church?"

"No, no!" cried Rose, as she started up; her eyes, with a frightened look in them, gazed steadily into those of the priest. Apparently taking no notice of her excitement, the priest asked:

"What is your name?"

"By birth, I am a Countess; and by marriage, a Marchioness of France," was the proud reply.

"God will not know you by either of those high-

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sounding titles," said the priest. "What is your Christian name?"

"Stephanie," was the word that came in a low whisper from the woman's lips.

For a moment neither spoke.

"Why have you sent for me, daughter?"

"Because," cried Stephanie, starting up and resting her head upon her hand, "because I wish to confess my sins. I do not think I am going to die now. I am not ready to die, but I cannot live much longer in such an unhappy state of mind. I have thought, Father, if I confessed to you, it would remove the burden from my heart."

"God only can do that," said the priest. "But, daughter, before you speak, I must tell you that I know who you are—or rather, I know that you are called The Lady of the Rose, and that, for the past year, you have ministered to the sick and dying sufferers from the pestilence. Your sins, indeed, must be great if they have not been expiated by your deeds of mercy. I will listen to your story."

Then Stephanie told Father Patricio of her childhood and youth, and her young womanhood. Of how her cousin Henri had loved her, and how her heart had never prompted her to return that love. Then she spoke of the arrival of the American army at Montreal, and how the Commander-in-Chief had taken up his quarters in her cousin's house.

"From the day I saw that man I loved him," she cried, impulsively. "I felt that I must be with him, be near him. I told him that my cousin Henri



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wished to join his army, and he made him an aide upon his staff. But Henri would not go without me. I knew he would not, and so the end that I desired was secured.

"After the attempt upon his life, at Quebec, I was with him often. I sat by his bedside and read to him, and talked with him, and learned to love him more than ever. I thought he loved me, but, when we parted at Halifax, his manner was as cold as though I had known him but a day. I returned to France, rebuilt my father's castle, and tried to live alone. I could not do it. I grew more unhappy every day, and when my cousin came to see me and again asked me to be his wife, I consented. That was my great sin, Father. I loved one man devotedly, and married another, for whom I had no love.

"I went to live at my husband's chateau. Then the man whom I loved came to France. We invited him to become our guest. Then came the tragic part of my life. I should not have known the real cause of the duel which led to my husband's death had not my maid learned it from her lover, who was a lieutenant in the army. The man who killed the Marquis had been overheard by my husband to link my name with that of the man whom I loved. No thought of such a condition of affairs had ever entered my husband's mind.

"He resented the statement as an insult and challenged the one who had made it.

"I went back to my castle a broken-hearted

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woman, but I could not stay there. At the end of a month, I knew that if I remained longer I should become a maniac. Then I sold my own estates and those which had come to me from my husband. I came to New York, where I placed a sum large enough to give me a modest living, in the hands of a reliable banker. The remainder of my fortune I deposited in the Manhattan Bank, subject to my drafts. I have spent it all during the past year."

The woman sank back upon her pillow.

"Is that all, daughter?" asked the priest.

"I have told you all that I have to tell," was the reply.

The priest was silent for a few moments, evidently communing with himself.

"Daughter," he began, "you will remember that before you told me your story, I said that your sins must be great, indeed, if you had not expiated them by your deeds of love and mercy. I think that you have. Your sins have been those of thought, rather than of deed; of omission, rather than commission. You wronged your husband when you married him without telling him the truth. He was happy while he lived, for he did not know the truth. You have always been unhappy, because you knew the truth but did not tell it."

The next day Stephanie received a letter from Carola.

"My dear Rose," it began. "How I wish you were here—up in the clouds. I have read about castles on the Rhine, but from none of them,

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surely, can a grander view be had than from the window before which I am writing. One is above the world here, at Rivermount, as they call it, and forgets its petty passions and jealousies. The lady of the castle is my friend. She is more beautiful and lovable than ever. She has told me all about her travels. She had a remarkable experience in France. With her father, she was a guest at the chateau of one of the nobility, but the very evening they arrived he was killed in a duel. She says that the dead man's wife was the most beautiful woman she had ever seen—and she wishes that she could see her again."

At this point, the letter fell from Stephanie's hands, and she cried bitterly. Father Patricio came and found her in tears. She passed him the letter to read. When he had finished it, he looked up, inquiringly.

"Do you not see," asked Stephanie, "all the world will soon know my story? The lord of the castle about which you have been reading is the man whom I have loved so long!"

When Miss Sumter returned to New York, she lost no time in seeking Rose at the hospital. She was delighted to find her much improved. She was sitting up and was engaged in conversation with Father Patricio when Miss Sumter entered.

"I have told him the story of my past life," said Stephanie to her friend.

"And I have advised her what to do," said

## THE LADY IN RED

Father Patricio. "I have told her that the world cannot heal such a sorrow as hers. It is only within the bosom of the Church that she can find rest and peace."

This sentiment was heard, but not re-echoed, by Miss Sumter, who was a stern Presbyterian, and who thought that the news that she brought would convince Rose that some solace for her sorrows might yet be found in the world.

When they were alone, Carola made a startling proposition to Rose.

"I wrote you," said she, "about the lovely time I had with the lady of the castle. I also had many enjoyable conversations with the lord of the castle, the lady's father. He is a great man, a wonderful man, and when I tell you who he is, you will wish to see him. You will hardly believe it, Rose, but when I told him about you and said that I knew that if you could live in that castle for a month that health and peace would surely return to you, he begged me to extend to you a cordial invitation to come and be the guest of his daughter and himself. He has heard of the great work you have done in the South, and told me to say that a visit from such a heroine would honor his home."

Miss Sumter noticed that her friend was greatly agitated. She waited for her to control herself. Finally, Stephanie spoke:

"What is the name of the lord of this castle?"

"You have heard of him," said Miss Sumter. "He has been a great general, and was our Presi-

## *THE CLIMAX*

dent for twelve years. His name is Aaron Burr."

"Is he married?" asked Stephanie.

"Oh, no!" cried Carola, with a laugh. "He is a widower, and seems devoted to his daughter and his grandson."

As Stephanie had said, years before, "I will go to Rolletaire," she now said:

"I will go to Rivermount."



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

"ARONA."

THEODOSIA received The Lady of the Rose with every exhibition of womanly tenderness. About a week after her arrival at Rivermount she said to her father:

"I am afraid our patient is not long for this world. I do not think that the doctors can do anything for her. I feel she will fade away slowly but surely. If I were you, father, I would go and see her. Her face seems strangely familiar, and yet I cannot think where I have seen her before."

Miss Sumter had been invited by Theodosia to remain with her friend, but she had declared that she must return to Charleston to attend to some neglected philanthropic duties; she promised, however, to come back at the end of a month, which had been fixed as the length of her friend's stay at Rivermount.

Theodosia was a capital housekeeper. She had taken charge of her father's residence at Richmond Hill after her mother's death. She was then but fourteen years of age, but, as regarded education and accomplishments, was a woman grown. She had presided at her father's table and had en-

## THE CLIMAX

tertained his guests, including the learned and the noble.

The almost numberless details of daily life at Rivermount were superintended by her, promptly and successfully. What time she could spare from her duties as mistress of the mansion she passed, at her father's request, with her guest. The face of The Lady of the Rose looked at her as through a cloud. Theodosia knew that she had seen the face, but could not recall when and where. When her household duties were imperative, Theodosia sent Maria Reynolds to attend to the wants of her guest.

One day, Stephanie dropped the book which had been sent to her by the master of the house, with his compliments, and which she had been reading rather listlessly, and looked fixedly into the face of Maria Reynolds.

"What can I do for you, Madam?" asked Maria, starting to her feet.

"I wish nothing," was the reply.

Maria resumed her seat. Then Stephanie turned to her and said, abruptly:

"Miss Reynolds, where have I seen you before? Were you ever in Montreal and Quebec?"

Maria, who was naturally acute, noticed that her questioner did not say Montreal or Quebec, but Montreal and Quebec. When she had first seen The Lady of the Rose, Maria had recognized the Countess, and was surprised that the recognition had not been mutual. Then she remembered that their visitor was a Countess, while she was

## *"ARONA"*

only a servant—a companion. Maria did not fear being recognized, for the master of the house knew her story and, she supposed, had told it to his daughter; so she replied:

"I have been in both cities, Madam."

"I thought so," said Stephanie, "but in neither place under your present name."

Maria knew that nothing was to be gained by a further concealment, so she said:

"I once served you, Madam. My name was then Jean Verviers. I nursed the master of this house when he was wounded at Quebec; I was then known as Jacqueline Morenne, but Maria Reynolds is my real name."

"What brought you to Canada?" asked Stephanie.

Maria paused before answering. Should she tell this woman the truth? Why not?

"I was sent to Canada as a spy," she began, "to discover all I could which could be used against the General of the American army, and send it to my employer in the United States."

"And you did your duty faithfully—to your employer?" queried Stephanie, with a tone of sarcasm in her voice.

"While I served my employer," said Maria, "I did it faithfully. At Quebec, I left his service and confessed all to the object of his plots. He has forgiven me, or I should not be here."

"But have you forgiven yourself?" asked Stephanie.

"I do not understand you," said Maria.



## THE CLIMAX

"I will explain. Do you think that it is noble or womanly, after acting as a spy, after doing all that you could to wreck a man's future, to become the recipient of his bounty? How can you live in this house, from day to day, knowing, as you do, that every time the man looks at you he must recall what you have done in the past?"

"He is too noble-minded, too magnanimous, for that!" cried Maria.

"And you should be too noble-minded, too penitent," said Stephanie, "to remain here longer and profit by his bounty. Do you think that your confession of your sins toward him entitles you to it? If you had done some noble act and he wished to reward you, it would be different, but why should you live here and profit by your sin? Father Patricio told me that no one could be truly penitent who intended to profit by his sin. Have you anywhere else to go?"

Maria burst into tears. She had never been a bad woman, but always a weak one.

"My father is dead," she said, "but my mother is living."

"Is she alone?" asked Stephanie.

"Yes," was the answer. "I was her only child."

"Will you allow me to advise you?" asked Stephanie.

"Yes, Madam," cried Maria. "I had never thought of it before. I have done wrong, but he was too good-hearted, too generous to tell me. I will do what you say is right."

"Then go to your mother at once," said Ste-

## "ARONA"

phanie. "No doubt she is old and needs your care and help. Do all you can to make her happy. You are not of my faith, but I point that duty out to you as your work of penitence."

Burr entered the room in which lay The Lady of the Rose. As he gazed upon her face, the single word, "Stephanie," came from his lips. She looked up, and a slight smile showed itself. Then she called him by a name by which she had known him in her heart, a simple transferring of a letter of his first name, but a change which gave to it a musical sound which it had never possessed in its original form. The word which she spoke was, "Arona!"

The next hour was one of mutual confessions and confidences. Burr spoke first:

"Since the day when I first met you at Montreal, Stephanie, I have always loved you; but I feared to betray that love. When I parted from you at Halifax, I called myself a coward, and I was one. I did not dare to speak of my love for you, because, if I did, I should have had to accompany it with the statement that, although I loved you, I could not marry you. Do not turn your face away from me, Stephanie, until you have heard my reason. It was not a noble one, yet it had some justification. You were a descendant of a line of kings, a daughter of a French aristocrat, the sworn foe of the common people. I was one of the common people; it was the common people who had made me the ruler of the United States. Do you not see,

## THE CLIMAX

Stephanie, that there were great reasons why I, one of the people, could not ask you, one of the nobility, to become my wife? I could have borne the assaults of my enemies, as I have done throughout my life, without replying; but if they had attacked you, as I knew they would, I could not have restrained my feelings. Then all might have been lost, both for you and for me."

Stephanie put her hand in his.

"You have done wisely, Arona. You are a great, good, and wise man, in whom passion is controlled by reason. I was an impulsive, loving woman, and naturally thought your indifference to me proceeded from some other cause. I am happy now that I know the real reason. I do not blame you for what you have done; you did it for the best and to make sure of my happiness."

Thus was their troth plighted. Aaron Burr had reached the climax of his ambition, as soldier, statesman—and lover!

"We have both suffered," said Burr. "The mother of my Theodosia was not so beautiful as you, Stephanie, but she was a woman of education, and possessed the most refined sensibilities. She was a widow, ten years my senior, and had two little fatherless boys. I loved her devotedly, and my heart was large enough to take not only her, but her children to my home. In later years, we adopted a little girl, our Natalie, as a companion for little Theodosia. There was no happier family in America than the one that lived at Richmond Hill."

## *"ARONA"*

"From the time we were children together," said Stephanie, "my cousin Henri always loved me. He was always my champion, my defender; but I always met his protestations of love with indifference and often, I fear, with unkindness. I married him, loving you all the while. But I have confessed that sin to Father Patricio, and feel that God has forgiven me. I used to tell Henri that he was no hero, but he proved himself one at last. He died in defense of my good name, and I thank God that he did not know the whole truth."

There was no desire on either side to postpone the marriage. Burr sent his grandson to Paramus with instructions to bring the Rev. Dr. Bogart with him to Rivermount. Burr said to Stephanie:

"The Reverend Doctor must be an old man now, but he officiated when I made Theodosia my wife, and, if you have no objection, Stephanie, he shall unite us."

"Arona," asked Stephanie, for she called him by no other name, "what is your religion?"

"With a few exceptions, I love my fellow men—and women," he replied, and there was a look upon his face that precluded further questioning.

The marriage was solemnized quietly at Rivermount in the presence of a few friends. The ceremony was performed by Dr. Bogart, who, although old and infirm, was not only willing, but desirous to officiate.

Twelve years later, one hot summer afternoon, a man, mounted upon a horse, might have been seen galloping over the road which led to the ex-Presi-

## THE CLIMAX

dent's house at Rivermount, some ten miles distant.

The courier's horse stumbled and fell. Fortunately, the accident occurred within a short distance of a public house. The horse had been slightly injured by the accident, but another was soon ready, and the dusty messenger leaped into the saddle, holding close to his breast a letter addressed to "Aaron Burr, Rivermount, New Jersey."

Young Alston had been elected a member of the State Senate of New York, and was living in Albany, attending to his legislative duties. Although the ex-President lived in New Jersey, his grandson had taken up his residence in and so was a citizen of the State of New York.

The messenger arrived at Rivermount and sounded the knocker upon the great door of the mansion. Burr started from the doze into which he had fallen.

"The messenger has come!" he cried.

Theodosia went down to receive the tidings, and, in a short time, returned to the room, bearing a letter.

"Read it out!" cried Burr, with still more vehemence. Theodosia looked over the letter and then a proud smile suffused her face.

"It is all right!" she cried. "Hear this:

"I have been chosen by a majority of fifteen votes."

"That means," said Theodosia, "that your

## *"ARONA"*

grandson is elected to be a member of the United States Senate from the State of New York."

A week later, Senator Alston arrived at Rivermount to receive the congratulations of his mother, grandfather, and "Madame," which was the name by which he always addressed Stephanie. He said that nothing could induce him to call so young and beautiful a woman "grandmother."

After the felicitations were over, Burr declared that his grandson, having been elected Senator from New York, must take up his permanent residence in that state. Theodosia, of course, must accompany him. It was her right and her duty, Burr declared.

"The world has given to no man a more loving, faithful, and devoted daughter; but I have Stephanie, and your duty, Theodosia, is now to your son. If Joseph were here, he would say that I am right."

Soon after her interview with Stephanie, Maria had gone to Theodosia and told her that she must leave Rivermount. Theodosia asked her to remain, as did Burr, and both inquired her reasons for taking such a step. The only one they could extract from her was that she felt it was her duty to go back to New Jersey and take care of her aged mother.

On the day of her departure, Burr sent a valuable gift to Mrs. Adelaide Prentiss.

"Tell your mother," he said, "that I have never forgotten the bears, and the afternoon we spent together in the tree."

## THE CLIMAX

At first, it had seemed very easy and simple for Theodosia to leave Rivermount and live with her son in New York, but Burr soon became aware of the sad gap that her presence would make at Rivermount. He had not wished Stephanie to become his housekeeper; his lease of life was now short, and he desired her company all the time. What was he to do in this dilemma? There was, apparently, only one course to follow. He must engage a housekeeper, and thus free Stephanie from the performance of those duties which would necessarily take her from his side.

He had just finished a letter which he intended to send to his friend Van Ness, who, still hale and hearty at seventy years of age, ten years younger than himself, was now Governor of New York.

In the letter he asked his friend to find for him a comely housewife, with or without a husband, to take charge of his household. He had just written "A. Burr" at the bottom of the sheet when a visitor was announced.

"Hello, Aaron!" was the salutation that greeted him.

"And how are you, Abe?" was the one that he sent in return. "What are you doing here?"

"Oh," said Abe, "I haven't seen yer fer so long, that I made up my mind I couldn't stand it no longer. Besides, yer see, I've left Litchfield; it got too old-fashioned and humdrum fer me. I've seen too much of the world to be satisfied with such a do-nothin' sort of a life. It's hard work fer a man who's been a soldier to turn farmer agin. So I've

## *"ARONA"*

brought Phoebe and the children to New York. I sold all I owned and got a good price fer it, and I've got 'nuff to live on fer a year, if I don't do a stitch of work; but I guess I can find some wealthy man who wants some one to look after his estate, and when I tell him what a capital housekeeper Phoebe is, he'll want her, too. As for the children, they're all big 'nough to do weedin' and light hoein'; so he'll git so much extry fer nothin'."

"Read that letter, Abe," said Burr, and he passed the unfolded sheet to his old friend.

"By gosh!" cried Abe. "I wish you were goin' to send that letter to me."

Burr took back the sheet, and, drawing his pen through the name of the Governor, wrote that of "Abiel Budlong, New York City."

It was the spring of the year 1836. President Taylor's term was drawing to a close, and the question as to who was to be his successor was agitating the public mind.

Ex-President Burr was now in his eightieth year. His opponents could not start up the usual cry that he was a candidate for the Presidency or that he was using his influence for the election of a military successor to President Taylor. If they had intended to make any such statement the basis of their campaign, they would certainly have been astonished at a declaration made by Gov. Van Ness at a public dinner, where he declared that the time had come to change the succession and that



## THE CLIMAX

a civilian, rather than a military man, should be chosen to follow President Taylor.

About a week after the dinner in question, Gov. Van Ness appeared at Rivermount. The customary greetings being over, he asked:

"Have you read my speech? Did it convey the idea that you wished me to?"

"Perfectly," was the ex-President's reply.

"Well, what do you think your old opponents say now?" asked Van Ness.

"I would like to know, but I do not care," was the response.

"Well, they say," said Van Ness, "that I have taken the position I have at your dictation. They say that Jackson and Taylor were your friends, and now that the great triumvirate, Burr, Jackson, and Taylor, have obtained all that the American people have in their power to give, that they fear it would detract from their honor to have any other military man to follow in their footsteps."

"To such depths of infamy are men led in factional opposition, founded on personal spite and malignity. But you may depend upon it, my dear Van Ness, that Henry Clay will be nominated and elected in spite of their opposition," and his prediction was verified.

A few months later, news came to Rivermount that Alexander Hamilton was dead. The cause of his demise was attributed to apoplexy. In New England, the home of Federalism, many honors were paid to the dead leader, but the remainder of the country gave little attention either to the death

## *"ARONA"*

or burial of this once famous champion of a lost cause.

"He was your enemy, was he not?" asked Stephanie. "Theodosia told me so when she was in France. Was it not so, Arona?"

"He was my bitterest foe," her husband replied. "He did not fight me openly, but in the dark. He made use of spies and informers, and secret correspondence."

"Why did you not call him out and kill him?" cried Stephanie, and there was a sparkle in her eye which spoke both anger and defiance.

"If I had done so," was her husband's reply, "when there was the most cause for taking such a course, the sentiment of the public was such that his untimely taking off would have made him a sainted martyr, and me a political and social out-cast."

"Then I am satisfied with what is," said Stephanie.

"And so am I," said her husband. "For your sake and mine, Stephanie, I am glad that *What Might Have Been* is a sealed book to us, and—" as his thoughts reverted to his daughter and grandson, he added, "to those we love, and to those who love us."

THE END.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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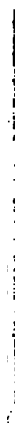
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